

25X1 10 Apr 68 Walsh to Chief, Special Intelligence Security Staff,
re Request for Briefing of [] U.S. Army 25X1

16 Apr 68 Enemy Strength Conference

25X1 17 Apr 68 Walsh Memo for Record re Telephone Conversation with
[] (OSD/SA)

6 May 68 Walsh to DCI Blue Note re Memo of Conversation (attached)
on meeting called by General Wheeler in response to
Mr. Helms' offer to brief the Chairman on the community
problems in estimating enemy strengths

13 May 68 Walsh to DDI memo re MACV Response to Wheeler Cable on
Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam

10 Jun 68 Walsh Memo of Conversation re 10 Jun 68 meeting to
discuss report prepared by CIA for the President on
"North Vietnam's Ability to Withstand Manpower
Attrition"

10 Sep 68 Walsh to DDI memo re General Wheeler Briefing Statement
(draft of General Wheeler's briefing statment for
White House/Congressional luncheon, 10 Sep 68, attached)

10 Sep 68 OER Comments on Briefing of General Wheeler, "Enemy
Strategic Options in South Vietnam"

Attachments: 10 Sep 68 [] memo to DDI re 25X1
Comment on the Wheeler Briefing on Enemy Strategic
Options in South Vietnam (operative sections of
draft memo requested by DDI re Enemy Strategic
Options in South Vietnam attached)

No date Agenda for Conference on DCI Assessment of Enemy
Strength, 10 April 1968

25X1 13 Nov 67 [] to Ch/IRA memo re Recent Developments in the
War of Words Between Saigon and Washington over the
Question, "How Do We Show We Are Winning?"

25X1 23 Mar [] to [] Blue Note re Greene's critique of
[] memo re CIA Study on Vietnamese Communist
Strength and Capabilities (attached)

19 Mar 68 Blind Memo re The Communists' Ability to Recoup Their
Tet Military Losses

25X1 19 Mar 68 [] to DDI memo re Accuracy of New York Times 19 March
1968 Article by Neil Sheehan on Communist Strength
in South Vietnam

22 Oct 69 Blind Memo re Chronology of the VC/NVA OB Problem

26 Mar 68 Blind Memo re The Growing Strength of NVA Forces in South Vietnam

25X1 1 Dec 75 [] to Walsh memo re CIA and MACV Estimates of Self-Defense Forces and Assault Youths in South Vietnam (Blind Memo re Retrospective View of Communist Force Levels in South Vietnam attached)

Jul 70 ER IM 70-102, Revised Estimates of VC/NVA Forces In South Vietnam, July 1970, Copy 6

No Date Grover Brown, USAF, to Chairman, JCS memo re VC/NVA Order of Battle

Attachments: Brown to Maj. Gen, Chesley Peterson Message re agreement to conference on OB in April 1968 and figures pointing out differences between MACV and CIA OB as of 31 Jan 68

1 Apr 68 Brig. Gen. Davidson cable to Maj. Gen. Brown re MACV methodology in estimating enemy strength

4 Apr 68 Notes from the DDI re Maxwell Taylor briefing and CIA-sponsored joint CIA/DIA MACV OB review

18 Mar 68 Walsh to DDI memo re Resolutions of the MACV OB Problem

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19 March 1968

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The Communists' Ability to Recoup Their Tet Military Losses

Introduction

1. This study examines enemy force strengths committed to the Tet offensive and losses sustained and attempts to place this attrition in perspective. In the following paragraphs, the available intelligence is presented together with observations and judgments concerning the size of the enemy forces committed and attrition sustained. The total size of the enemy's organized manpower base -- the backdrop necessary to put this attrition into perspective -- is also considered. Finally, the problem of the enemy's ability to recoup his losses through recruitment, upgrading, and infiltration is addressed.

Tet Losses and Participating Strengths

2. The examination makes use of enemy killed-in-action (KIA) reported by the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (US MACV) from the period 30 January through 21 February -- some 38,600 men. This period covered the mass urban attacks and the "second round" on 18-19 February, as well as its immediate aftermath. The fighting since 21 February has been excluded on the grounds that, although enemy losses have continued heavy, they have been overall at a more "normal" level for the war.

3. The examination is based on the judgment that roughly 80,000 enemy were involved in the attacks. This includes North Vietnamese (NVA) units and main and local forces of about 60,000. (This latter figure was reached

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independently in a CIA analysis* and is also roughly accepted by most OB authorities who have studied the offensive, including the US MACV.) The additional 20,000 men are an estimate of the number of guerrillas who participated in the urban phase of the offensive.

Table I

Strength of Participating Communist Forces
in the Tet Attacks

	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Total	77,000	100
NVA	21,600	27.8
VC Main Force	16,800	21.6
VC Local Force	19,300	24.9
Guerrillas	20,000	25.7

4. There is good evidence of extensive guerrilla participation. Captured documents have now provided detailed planning for the attacks in a few provinces. These suggest that the enemy hoped to use from one-half to two-thirds of his guerrilla force in an offensive role of some kind. It appears that about 20,000 guerrillas actually participated in the urban attacks. The remainder were used in various offensive roles in rural areas.

5. The dilemma with respect to the casualties arises when the reported enemy KIA (38,600) is considered against the total offensive force

*See ER IM 68-23, Communist Units Participating in Attacks During the Tet Offensive, 30 January Through 13 February 1968, 21 February 1968, SECRET.

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estimated to have been involved -- about 80,000. This would suggest that approximately one-half of the attacking force was killed in the offensive and its aftermath. This is difficult to accept, however, given the post-action reports on the status of some enemy units and the subsequent level of enemy activity throughout the country. Casualties for this period are more difficult to reconcile when an estimate for wounded is taken into account. Even if the standard, conservative factor of .35 for dies of wounds or permanently disabled is applied for every KIA, over 13,000 more men are added to the losses. The total casualties computed in this conservative manner, would be nearly two-thirds of our strength estimate of those involved in the attacks. If the 1.5 to 1 ratio of wounded to killed in action is applied, the resultant casualty total exceeds the forces committed.

Possible Non-Military Casualties

6. Assuming that the KIA figure itself is accurate, it almost certainly must include a substantial proportion of other organizational elements of the enemy apparatus and non-participating civilians who happened to be caught in the urban battle areas. US military officials in Vietnam agree that some are probably included. In addition, it is known that the Communists made a major effort in the few months prior to Tet to fill up their regular and guerrilla force ranks and to recruit laborers for logistic support. Many of the POW's from the offensive were individuals virtually taken from street corners and pressed into the attacks by the enemy. Eyewitnesses, moreover, report that large numbers of civilian-type personnel

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were used as "shock troops" in many of the urban assaults. Military conflict in urban areas normally produces high civilian casualties; interrogations and captured documents indicate that large numbers of civilian laborers were used in the Tet offensive. Considered in this light, it would not be unreasonable for casualties to persons outside the regular and guerrilla force structure to represent a substantial share of total losses.

The Enemy's Manpower Base

7. Therefore, in assessing the effect of the high reported Tet casualties on the enemy's force structure, it is necessary to consider the enemy's total organized manpower base -- the total that could be expected to make some military contribution and take casualties. For this reason, enemy militia, assault youth, and even political infrastructure are included as sources for troop replacement, as casualty recipients, and as part of the remaining Communist threat.

8. The organized enemy manpower base in South Vietnam prior to Tet and following an extensive recruiting drive sets up approximately as follows:

Table II

Estimated Communist Organized Manpower Base
as of 30 January 1968

VC/NVA Main and Local Forces	160,000
Guerrillas	100,000-120,000
Administrative Services	75,000-100,000
Self-defense Militia	100,000
Political Cadre	80,000-120,000
Assault Youth	<u>15,000</u>
	530,000-615,000

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VC/NVA Main and Local Forces

9. Main Forces are those military units directly subordinate to COSVN or a VC Military Region or Subregion. NVA units in SVN are counted as Main Forces, although technically, some of these units are directly subordinate to command entities in NVN. Local Forces are defined as those military units directly subordinate to a provincial or district party committee and normally operate only within a specified VC province or district. There were about 160,000 Communist Main and Local Forces in SVN on 30 January 1968. This total includes MACV's January order of battle base figure of 115,000, plus an estimate of troops missing from the OB due to MACV's accounting procedures.

Administrative Service

10. MACV defines the "Administrative Service" troops as "military personnel in identified COSVN, military region, military subregion, province, and district staffs, and rear service technical units of all types directly subordinate to these headquarters." As of 31 December 1967 MACV's

OB held 37,725 such soldiers in South Vietnam. There are two principle

First, it is extremely unlikely on the face of it that a modern army of
reasons why this estimate is too low. *Captured documents indicate that*

Second,
there are many more service troops at each echelon than carried in the

MACV December OB. On balance, 75-100,000 is a more reasonable estimate of the number of administrative service troops.

Guerrillas

11. Guerrillas are Viet Cong soldiers subordinate to the villages (full time and well armed) and hamlets (part time and fairly well armed)

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in South Vietnam. They are the military arm of the party at the local level responsible for the defense of VC controlled hamlets and villages. They also engage in harassment and sabotage raids and attacks on GVN posts and hamlets. Prior to Tet and before the upgrading of about 20,000 guerrillas, there were 110,000 to 120,000 guerrillas in South Vietnam.

Militia

12. The Militia or Self-defense force is essentially a poorly armed part time hamlet labor force whose primary function is the construction and preparation of defense positions and combat hamlets and villages. They participate in combat only in defense of their hamlets or as members of a labor force. The present size of the militia is probably on the order of 100,000.

Political OB

13. MACV defines the Viet Cong infrastructure as "the political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek to control the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the party (People's Revolutionary Party) control structure, and the leadership and administration of a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam), both of which extend from the national through the hamlet level." It is estimated that the number of people belonging to the infrastructure -- as defined by US MACV -- is on the order of 80-120,000.

Assault Youth

14. The Assault Youth is a partially armed combat support organization whose main function is battlefield logistics and casualty evacuation.

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A document dated September 1966 indicates that at this time the number of Assault Youth was about 15,000. Due to the increased importance of the Assault Youth and the reported formation of new Assault Youth companies, 15,000 is believed to be a conservative estimate of total strength.

15. Viewed numerically against a 530-615,000 base, the enemy's losses, particularly in terms of main and local force strength, could be relatively insignificant as a long-term problem. It would seem reasonable that, if the Communists have managed in the past to maintain an organized manpower base of the size postulated in Table II, they could recoup their Tet losses in a relatively short period of time, both by recruitment-conscription into the lower level military elements, and by upgrading to the regular forces from the lower level units.

The Replacement Campaign

16. There is abundant evidence that the Communists are now making a strenuous effort to recoup their losses and, in fact, to raise their overall military force strength above the pre-Tet levels. Reports from South Vietnam's countryside indicate that the enemy has been recruiting heavily in all four corps areas, particularly in the populous Delta and northern lowlands. Moreover, this recruitment has often taken the form of coerced conscription -- a policy designed to provide the maximum number of recruits in the shortest possible period of time.

17. There is little question that the Tet offensive has opened a new recruitment base to the Viet Cong in the South Vietnamese countryside. A declining recruitment pool because of refugee movement to GVN-held areas

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was partially responsible for VC recruitment shortfalls in 1967. The new pool, consisting of the populations of hamlets in the countryside where the VC formerly have had little or no influence, can be expected to boost 1968 recruitment greatly. New-found influence in rural areas -- if only in the form of increased popular respect for VC power -- will permit VC recruiters easy access to hamlets and a ready audience of youths.

18. The intensity of the current recruiting drive, the availability of manpower, and the current freedom of the enemy in formerly contested and even some secure areas of the country, all add to the impression that the Communists will be able to replace their losses numerically in a relatively short period of time. Prior to the Tet offensive, enemy recruitment was estimated by US MACV at between 3-5,000 a month. It is now clear, however that this rate had shot up in the months immediately preceding Tet. In view of the current enemy recruiting drive and access to the countryside, it does not seem improbable that they can at least double this rate to between 6,000 and 10,000 men a month, at least over the short term. At such a rate, it would take the Communists no more than six months, at a maximum, to replace their reported KIA losses during the Tet offensive.

19. This computation, of course, does not take into account the "normal" Communist losses since 21 February, or the future losses during the recuperation period. Over a six-month time frame, such losses could perhaps double the total replacement necessary. During certain periods within the past year, for example, Communist losses have run at a rate of around 4,000 men per month. On the other hand, the replacement rate

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described above for the Tet losses does not take into account the continuing infiltration of manpower from North Vietnam into the South. This has been running at a rate of about 5,000 to 6,000 men a month on the average during the past year and conceivably could offset the additional combat losses during the Tet recovery period. Infiltration would clearly tend, over a six-month period, at least, to offset NVA unit losses in South Vietnam.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
		21 Mar 68
TO: DD/OER		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS:		
<p>A version of our original idea for paper # I</p> <p>78-157095R olden CA 7-00</p>		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

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13 November 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, IRA
THROUGH : Chief, D/I
FROM : Acting Chief, I/SV
SUBJECT : Recent Developments in the War of Words Between Saigon
and Washington over the question, "How Do We Show We
Are Winning?"

25X1 1. The principle item (attached) is Saigon's 10573 dated 7 November 1967, which came into my hands late Thursday. This telegram is keyed to Saigon's 7867 of 7 October 1967. This was the proposed briefing that [] drafted a reply to. Our comments were to the [] draft. Saigon's 10573 references States' 52950 and 58043 which I haven't located yet. Presumably, one of them is the [] reply. 25X1

2. We also have (attached) a long memorandum, dated 24 October 1967, from Leonhart to Bundy which, with somewhat more realism than Saigon exhibits, makes minimum and maximum projections of the pacification effort based on the assumption of present strategy. This memorandum was stimulated by 7867.

3. For your information and use, I have prepared a set of comments to Saigon's 10573 (attached).

4. You will recall that States' 45007 (attached) of 27 September 1967 which was drafted by the White House, set this whole chain off. This telegram dealt exclusively with the matter of population control. During the interim between Saigon's 7867 and 10573, both of which cover the waterfront and were in response to 45007, we received Saigon's 9095 of 20 October 1967 (attached). This item reads much like 45007 and deals with population control. Saigon's position is, if you can't use our all systems go approach, let's get started with this "one of a series."

5. The numbers used in 9095 are technically correct but there are problems with the presentation. The most significant weakness is the failure to carefully discuss who the persons are who are coming under GVN control and why. 9095 states that, "many are refugees..., others have moved to the cities where they could find jobs and improvement has

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resulted from the pacification program of the Vietnamese government." Emphasis is placed on the fact that this hurts the VC and it does.

6. Nothing is said concerning the relative numbers of these three categories and the fact that we may be paying a heavy price for our success. Refugees apparently are generated primarily by our sweeps and huge quantity of indirect fire. In 1966 the ordnance used for "harassment and interdiction" fire alone cost over one billion dollars. There is little evidence that sizable numbers of people leave VC and contested areas because of VC terror and the VC's political alienation of the peasantry. GVN security means security against the danger from Allied operations. There is no meaningful distinction between refugees and those who go to the cities to find work except perhaps that the war's destruction of the rural economy was the prime motivating force rather than fear of Allied operations in the case of the latter. Suffice it to say that the refugee camps and the new urban lumpen proletariat are anything but islands of support for the Saigon government. The numbers of these people has become so great as to affect significantly the overall political complexion of the country.

7. As to the relative numbers, there were already about 2 million of these uprooted people at the beginning of 1967, although official rolls list only 700,000. For the twelve months -- October 1967 through September 1968 -- Leonhart's memo used the following projections:

A. Current Performance Projections:		
RD Hamlet Program		653,000
Refugees		485,000
B. Improved Performance Projections:		
RD Hamlet Program		1,144,000
Refugees		530,000
C. Optimum Performance Projections:		
RD Hamlet Program		2,163,000
Refugees		710,000

If we get current performance from the RD program and the "optimum" for refugees, we will continue to generate refugees faster than additional secure hamlet population.

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13 November 1967

Comments to Saigon's 10573

NOTE: 10573 and these comments are both keyed to Saigon's 7867.

3A. Population Control. See paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 of the covering memo.

3B. Although we have the MACV recruiting study, we still believe that your recruiting estimate may not stand hard scrutiny. The study does not present any of the hard evidence, it is only a methodology for projecting a country-wide estimate based on "known recruitment in certain districts and provinces." Therefore, the degrees of confidence only refer to the projection and not to the whole estimate.

A recent preliminary study done by Washington analysts utilizing a similar methodology to that of MACV suggests a mid-point of a range for an estimate closer to the high side of your bracket. If this number is correct and the recruitment rate has been falling, as is probably the case, then the earlier estimate of 7,000 agreed on at the Honolulu Conference may have been too low.

2. Force Ratios. Although the force ratios shifted somewhat to Allied favor with the build-up of US troops, the ratio has not improved within the last year on maneuver battalion basis. Taking the DMZ area as it has developed during 1967 into consideration, the force ratio may have turned against the Allied forces despite heavy enemy losses.

3. This is simply a description of the expansion of our forces and programs.

5. Although it is true the enemy has been forced to change his tactics, this should not be used as evidence that he is in danger of collapsing. In many respects, his new tactics have met with success. His use of heavy weapons has caused the share of friendly casualties resulting from explosive ordnance to increase and has, particularly in I Corps, tied down large numbers of Allied troops. Also, we should not predict at this date that he will not be able to continue to hold up the RD timetable despite GVN/ARVN efforts described.

3D. Although it is true that we do not know as much as we would like about morale in North Vietnam and amongst the fighting forces in South

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Vietnam, it would be dangerous to draw any historical parallels. History is replete with examples of peoples who have fought to the last man even though the cause was hopeless. The fact that the enemy "could" collapse, cannot be used as "evidence" that he will.

3E. We remain unconvinced that there is a serious "general shortage" of weapons and ammunition. The enemy has never passed up opportunities to collect weapons and the fact he needs them sufficiently to take them when possible is not evidence of a serious shortage. However, difficulties with all supplies may be greater than before, particularly in II and III Corps.

8A. Based on all available sources of intelligence and specifically the photo reconnaissance you note, we believe that the North Vietnamese continue to be able to make repairs to their fixed transportation facilities rapidly enough to maintain present traffic levels. The forty-six days which you note it took them to complete repairs to JCS 12 is not at all representative. JCS 12 is a long bridge located over the widest water spanned in North Vietnam. On the average, bridges are currently being reconstructed as rapidly as ever.

8B. Further, the North Vietnamese continue to build additional redundancy into their transportation system. Because of this excess flexible capacity, we believe that your index of tons transhipped errs on the high side. We agree, nonetheless, that efficiency has been degraded and that we are exacting a high cost.

It should be noted relative to construction and labor force problems that North Vietnam continues to find resources with which to build completely new rail and highway routes as well as make its repairs and construct new bypasses. On this whole matter, the relevant question is, has North Vietnam the resources and will to continue to cope with our present effort? The collective judgment of Washington analysts is that he has the resources and we have no evidence that will is not sufficiently strong to continue.

8C. We agree with the reasons you give for the reduction in ship turn around time at Haiphong, but are not certain that transportation difficulties have any significant bearing on the amount of goods stockpiled in that port.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
TO: <i>Paul Walsh</i>		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
<i>4F19</i>	<i>HQs</i>	
REMARKS:		
<i>State Comments</i>		
FROM: 		
ROOM NO.		
<i>5C44</i>	<i>HQs</i>	
FORM NO. 241 1 FEB 55	REPLACES FORM 36-8 WHICH MAY BE USED.	GPO : 1957-O-439445 (47)

MEMORANDUM FOR:	
<p><i>Herewith the note 85 cable</i> <i>and</i> <i>Greene's critique of</i> <i>your memo. Please also</i> <i>expose the latter to Paul</i> <i>Walsh next week.</i></p>	
	
<i>23 March</i>	(DATE)
FORM NO. 101 1 AUG 54	REPLACES FORM 10-101 WHICH MAY BE USED. (47)

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22 October 1969

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Chronology of the VC/NVA OB Problem

1. Through mid-1967 the US intelligence community looked to MACV for all OB and associated intelligence materials. These included the strength and force structure of all enemy echelons plus gains (recruiting and infiltration) and losses (KIA, POW's, and other losses). All of these estimates were available in monthly products published by the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV), a component of MACV J-2.

2. There had been some Washington criticism of the MACV estimates. Many of these were made known to MACV by Washington analysts during visits to Saigon and at an OB conference held in Hawaii in February 1967.

3. During the summer of 1967 differences on several aspects of the OB were aired at USIB representatives meetings which had been convened to draft SNIE 14.3-67, Capabilities of the Vietnamese Communists for Fighting in South Vietnam. MACV estimates for the Main and Local Forces and for the loss and gain components were not seriously questioned. But, CIA analysts working with captured documents and interrogations had become convinced that MACV's estimate of the "Administrative Services" -- the rear services support troops -- the irregulars, and the so-called

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Hag
FAP
Att to Hag (Cathay)
liber a copy if
FAP wants
to keep this

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political infrastructure (VCI) might be underestimated by 50 percent or more.

4. To resolve the dispute a conference was held in Saigon in September 1967, attended by representatives of MACV, DIA, CIA, CINCPAC, and the Department of State. Although the conference came up with a set of estimates, which were subsequently published in SNIE 14.3-67, the analytical problems were not resolved satisfactorily.

5. MACV had been briefing the press in Saigon each month on the VC/NVA OB. During the summer and fall of 1967, the total OB estimate including the VCI had been about 300,000 and had shown a steady downward trend. It was this OB that MACV wished to have included in the SNIE. At the Saigon conference, it was apparent that MACV was less interested in the components of the estimate than that the overall estimate be in the vicinity of the then public 300,000 figure.

6. The MACV offer before the conference had been 296,115. At the conference a range of 298,000-333,000 was agreed to. MACV's first post conference OB carried 319,852 and this was subsequently lowered again to under 300,000.

7. As a result of the general dissatisfaction with MACV OB estimates, we began to take a hard look at the entire OB question and geared up to properly research the subject. We soon determined that our differences were wider than we had thought and included the Main and Local Forces, recruiting and infiltration, as well as the other components.

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8. By the spring of 1968 we had come up with the following set of OB estimates (in contrast to the figures carried by MACV).

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	<u>(31 March 1968)</u>	
	<u>CIA</u>	<u>MACV*</u>
Combat Forces		
Main and Local Forces	145,000-170,000	120,000-140,000
Administrative Services	60,000- 80,000	35,000- 40,000
Guerrillas	90,000-110,000	70,000- 80,000
Subtotal	<u>295,000-360,000</u>	<u>235,000-260,000</u>
Other Irregular Forces		
Self-Defense Militia	80,000-120,000	----**
Assault Youth	10,000- 20,000	---
Subtotal	<u>90,000-140,000</u>	
Political Infrastructure		
Professional Cadre	80,000- 90,000	75,000- 85,000
Supporting Staffs	10,000- 30,000	
Subtotal	<u>90,000-120,000</u>	<u>75,000- 85,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>475,000-620,000</u>	<u>310,000-345,000</u>

* These ranges were provided by MACV representatives at the CIA April 1968 OB conference.

** MACV believes that these elements are too difficult to quantify and that to include them even in an insurgency base concept is misleading.

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9. In order to make our findings known to the Intelligence Community and to create a dialogue on the OB problem, we hosted a conference in April 1968. At this conference to which MACV and CINCPAC and Washington members were invited, we presented papers on each element of the OB to support our estimates. These papers included our methodologies and pointed up the weaknesses of MACV methodologies. The MACV estimates were and continue to be deficit in two general areas. (1) Because of overly rigid acceptance criteria for intelligence information, considerable useful information is disregarded. (2) MACV estimates are not true estimates but are the sum of data for which multiple confirmation is available. Normally acceptable estimative techniques are not used. The result has been estimates that are too low. At this point and on into 1969, MACV refused to use even SI information in its estimates.

10. At our conference MACV refused to accept any meaningful changes in its OB estimates. The Department of State supported the CIA estimates and methodological approaches fully as did NSA within the limits of its charter. DIA conferees agreed substantially with the CIA positions but under pressure from MACV gave little support in the final report of the conference.

11. As a result of MACV's complete intransigence, it was decided to continue to pursue satisfactory estimates in the Washington community for National Intelligence purposes. The DCI met with Generals Carroll and Wheeler to enlist DIA support. Through a continuing dialogue and

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informal working groups, we have made great progress. However, a continuing problem has resulted from the fact that the press, Saigon, and some Washington organizations continue to use MACV estimates.

12. In August 1968 a joint CIA/DIA agreement on the NVA presence in South Vietnam was published. We estimated that there were between 140,000 and 160,000 NVA soldiers in South Vietnam. The MACV August OB carried 99,064-102,064.

13. This estimate was followed by a CIA/DIA agreed set of figures for the combat OB for 31 December 1968. In contrast is the MACV OB for that date.

	<u>CIA/DIA</u>	<u>MACV</u>
Main and Local Combat Forces		
NVA	105,000-125,000	89,032- 92,032
VC	45,000- 55,000	44,200- 47,200
Subtotal	<u>150,000-180,000</u>	<u>133,232-139,232</u>
Administrative Services		
NVA	10,000- 20,000	5,050
VC	45,000- 55,000	36,867
Subtotal	<u>55,000- 75,000</u>	<u>41,917</u>
Guerrillas	<u>60,000-100,000</u>	<u>58,146</u>
TOTAL	<u>265,000-355,000</u>	<u>233,305-239,305</u>

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14. In February 1969, at the request of the NSC's Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam, an Inter-Agency Intelligence Committee (IIC) was established including DIA, State, NSA, and CIA, under the chairmanship of CIA. The IIC was tasked with producing detailed OB on VC/NVA forces in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. The IIC's first estimates, for March 1969, were completed in time to form the basis of the OB estimates used in SNIE 14.3-69.

15. We believe that the Committee has functioned well. There are no significant differences in the Washington community on the OB problem.

16. The IIC is about to complete its second quarterly OB -- for 30 June 1969. In addition, with State concurrence, DIA/CIA have produced retroactive OB estimates which show the erosion of VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam between September 1968 and September 1969. These are as follows:

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	<u>September 1968</u>	<u>September 1969</u>
Main and Local Forces		
NVA	120,000-140,000	90,000-100,000
VC	50,000- 60,000	40,000- 50,000
Subtotal	<u>170,000-200,000</u>	<u>130,000-150,000</u>
Administrative Services		
NVA	20,000- 30,000	20,000- 30,000
VC	40,000- 50,000	40,000- 50,000
Subtotal	<u>60,000- 80,000</u>	<u>60,000- 80,000</u>
Guerrillas	<u>60,000-100,000</u>	<u>50,000- 80,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>290,000-380,000</u>	<u>240,000-310,000</u>

The estimated erosion is 50,000-70,000.

17. At the same time differences with MACV have also narrowed. This is primarily due to the fact that VC/NVA forces have been run down toward the estimates MACV carries, but also because MACV has begun to show more flexibility in making estimates. Largely at the urging of DIA, MACV has created an All-Source strength branch to handle these estimates. In addition, an informal analytical exchange procedure has been set up including DIA, CIA, CINCPAC, and MACV.

18. There remain a number of problems, however, some of them are a matter of communicating agreed data to the necessary users, some are more fundamental. The latter constitute Washington's problem with MACV.

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19. MACV's collateral OB, figures from which were used in the 13 October 1969 Kissinger memorandum, is not the proper source for MACV estimates. MACV now produces an All-Source OB. DIA receives this and by agreement with MACV is responsible for its dissemination in Washington. Also by agreement, it is not intended that it be disseminated because it will simply create an additional "new set of numbers" problem. Nonetheless, estimates from MACV contained in cables etc. are from this All-Source OB.

20. The MACV All-Source OB still has serious shortcomings in our view.

a. We have only minor differences at this time with its estimate of manpower in the battalion and larger sized units. However, there is a reluctance at MACV to quantify the decline in enemy strength that has occurred over the past year and this is reflected in the trend of this element of the force structure.

b. MACV's estimate of the manpower in the Local Force structure is about one-half to two-thirds what it should be, but as these elements have been worn down, the size of the error decreases. Again, however, the declining trend is masked.

c. The same problem applies to the MACV Guerrilla estimate.

21. In addition to the current bias which leans toward holding the size of the OB up, there is an ingrained reluctance in MACV J-2 to change previous estimates and methodologies. At a recent OB conference

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held at MACV, working level analysts and intermediate supervisors expressed considerable interest in our estimates, methodologies, and critiques of their work. They believed, however, that making any significant changes would be difficult.

22. A number of solutions to the problem come to mind. It may not be realistic to attempt to force MACV directly to agree with the Washington point of view. The Command will retain the right to produce intelligence estimates and assessment for its own use and answer requests from Washington as it sees fit. The better solution would probably be for Washington consumers to look to the Washington Intelligence Community for such data and expect to receive coordinated timely estimates. This could be accomplished by firming up present procedures with appropriate directives. AS MACV sees the present trend continuing to develop, we may get more cooperation. This in effect would result in a data pool of coordinated estimates and require participants to take care with departmental intelligence not consistent with the data pool.

23. A note of caution is in order regarding such an agreed data base. Users must expect the data to change from time to time as new information becomes available and new analysis is performed. If we do not retain this flexibility, we will fall into the trap MACV has been in. Only because we have retained open minds have our analysts continued to break new ground and improve our understanding of enemy strengths and capabilities.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
26 March 1968

MEMORANDUM

The Growing Strength of NVA
Forces in South Vietnam

Force Levels

1. During the past 3 or 4 months there has been a dramatic increase in the movement of regular North Vietnamese Army units into South Vietnam. Early last fall (1 November) there were over 70,000 North Vietnamese soldiers fighting in South Vietnam. The number has risen rapidly and today may be over 100,000. This increase in strength has been achieved despite the thousands of casualties suffered in the intensified combat of the past two months.

2. The following tabulation shows the relative unadjusted strengths of VC and NVA main and local forces as of 1 November 1967 and 25 March 1968:

	<u>1 November 1967</u>	<u>25 March 1968</u>
<u>NVA Forces</u>		
In NVA units	61,000	88,000
In VC units	<u>10,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Sub-total	71,000	103,000
<u>VC Forces</u>	71,000	61,000
Total	<u>142,000</u>	<u>164,000</u>

3. The tabulation shows that the relative strength of NVA forces has increased from 50 percent of total main and local force strengths on 1 November 1967 to 63 percent near the end of March 1968. The relative strength of NVA forces is even greater when these figures are adjusted for the extraordinary casualties of the Tet offensive (30 January-21 February 1968). We estimate on a very rough and preliminary basis that the bulk of the casualties were sustained by VC main and local forces (including guerrillas upgraded and attached to local force units). We estimate tentatively that NVA filler group infiltration has been more than adequate to maintain NVA force levels at their pre-Tet level of some 100,000 troops. Vc main and local force strength has probably declined to a level of about 45,000-50,000 troops.

4. Thus, we estimate that today there may be nearly two times as many North Vietnamese regular army soldiers in South Vietnam as there are VC regular soldiers. In the I Corps area, NVA units account for 80 percent of the enemy forces. On a country-wide basis North Vietnam now has nine divisions consisting of 26 regiments plus an additional 16 independent regimental equivalents deployed in South Vietnam. This compared to VC deployment of 2 divisions ^{of 3 regts each} and an additional 21 ²² regimental equivalents. A large part of the VC force is maintained by NVA troops.

Infiltration

5. During the past 4-5 months Hanoi has moved into South

Vietnam two and perhaps more infantry divisions. These forces are increasingly supported by new regiments and battalions equipped with modern artillery and rockets.

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OER Comments on Briefing of General Wheeler,
"Enemy Strategic Options in South Vietnam"

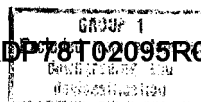
The briefing is a reasonable appraisal of current enemy strategy in South Vietnam. It indicates that when enemy activity accelerated on 18 August there had been a tendency to assume that the enemy would follow the same strategy as was used in the Tet and May offensive. The briefing suggests that the Communists have changed their strategy and that presently have three options.

- 1) A moderate increase in the tempo of activity short of that noted during Tet and the May offensives.
- 2) A build-up in intensity to the levels noted during those previous offensives.
- 3) A phase-down to that tempo noted during June/July and early August.

The briefing concludes that the enemy is following option 1, but retains the capability of moving toward either of the other two options if the Communists so desire.

There is little to take exception to in the briefing. The enemy obviously has not launched a Tet style offensive since the 18 August and may not do so for many months if ever. The report does not suggest the enemy is unable to conduct more offensive operations, but that he does not choose to do so at this time. His continued capability to further escalate the war at a future time is recognized.

OD/OER
10 September 1968



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10 September 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

**SUBJECT : Comment on the Wheeler Briefing on
Enemy Strategic Options in South Vietnam**

1. We are very uneasy over the source upon which this briefing is based: an enemy document allegedly captured by the GVN from a high level communist cadre. Our DDP friends tell us that the GVN source which passed us the document is reliable, but this does not mean that the MSS which picked it up did not actually get their hands on a phony.

2. The document reads a little too much like a directive from a Western political body to its subordinates. It is not in the format that we usually associate with high level enemy documents and contains some elements which translators in the past have told us is indicative of a phony. DDP is checking with Saigon now to see if they can turn up anything additional on the document.

3. In general, we agree with the basic thesis advanced in the document that the Communists have modified their strategy for the third round offensive and that it involves retention of more flexibility in moving against the cities as well as economy of force tactics which will permit the Communists to spin the offensive out over a longer period. There are many other recent documents which contain piecemeal indications of enemy strategy and which point in the same direction. We hesitate, however, to pin it all on the specific phrases and ideas contained in the document in the Wheeler briefing. We think it important to be selective in our use of documents at this point, since there are other indications that some spurious stuff which purports to be from the enemy high command is being pushed to us. For example, we are now examining a series of documents from [redacted] Da Nang who has provided some good intelligence on enemy military plans in that sector. Almost everyone who has seen these documents both here

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and in the field has serious reservations about them. In our own writing for OCI publications we are now usually attempting to take the common denominator of the documentary evidence, and reflect it in generalized statements, rather than in specifics.

4. Our own views on enemy strategy in the current offensive, utilizing the documents as one source are upcoming in a memo requested by the DDI. (A burn copy of the operative sections of the first draft of that memo is attached).


Chief, Indochina Division

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ENEMY STRATEGIC OPTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

GENERAL WHEELER, AS-YOU-KNOW, SINCE THE ENEMY ACTIVITY ACCELERATED IN SOUTH VIETNAM ON ABOUT 18 AUGUST, THERE HAS BEEN A NATURAL TENDENCY TO ASSUME THAT THE ENEMY WILL FOLLOW HIS TET AND MAY PATTERNS. IT MIGHT BE WELL TO KEEP IN MIND THAT ^{other} ~~ANOTHER~~ MORE MODERATE ^{WAS} ~~IS~~ OPEN TO HIM.

THERE IS A CREDIBLE AMOUNT OF INTELLIGENCE EVIDENCE, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE ENEMY MAY NOT PRECISELY FOLLOW HIS PREVIOUS PATTERNS. CERTAIN STATISTICS COULD LEAD ONE TO BELIEVE THAT WE ARE APPROACHING THE INTENSITY OF THE ^{EARLIER} ~~MAY~~ OFFENSIVE; FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE MAY OFFENSIVE WE HAD A TOTAL OF 5 BATTALION-SIZE ATTACKS AS COMPARED WITH 9 DURING THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE NATURE OF THE TARGETS HIT THUS FAR AND THE DISPOSITION OF THE ENEMY FORCES DO NOT SUPPORT THIS THESIS.

WE HAVE COME UPON A DOCUMENT WHICH ALLUDES TO ^{ANOTHER} ~~THIS-OTHER~~ OPTION. THE DOCUMENT WAS CAPTURED ON 24 JULY AND REVEALS CURRENT COSVN POLICY. ~~[THE DIRECTIVE WAS SIGNED BY "7-HONG," A POSSIBLE ALIAS FOR COSVN PARTY SECRETARY PHAM HUNG]~~ IT WAS ADDRESSED TO "ALL ZONES" AND ANNOTATED "THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE DESTROYED AFTER READING."

A SUMMARY OF THE COSVN STRATEGY AS STATED IN THE DOCUMENT IS AS ^{Shown:} ~~FOLLOWS:~~

VG1 → "IT DIRECTS ALL ARMED FORCES TO MAINTAIN ACTIVITIES IN CITIES AND TOWNS ON A PERMANENT BASIS. GUERRILLA ACTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY. IT DEMANDS

THAT EVERY OPPORTUNITY BE TAKEN TO LIBERATE THE COUNTRYSIDE, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF DISTRICT TOWNS, EVEN IF PART OF THE MAIN FORCE MUST BE USED FOR THE TASK."

THE DOCUMENT SPECIFIES WHICH IMPORTANT LINES OF COMMUNICATION LEADING TO SAIGON MUST BE DESTROYED, ESPECIALLY THE BRIDGES, ROUTE 4, AND THE BIEN HOA SUPERHIGHWAY. THE MAIN FORCE -- PROBABLY THE 5TH AND 9TH VC DIVISIONS AND THE 7TH NVA DIVISION -- IS TO REMAIN MOBILE AND FLEXIBLE AND TO RETAIN THE INITIATIVE. IF THE ALLIES MASS TO PROTECT TOWNS, ATTACKS SHOULD BE MADE IN THE RURAL AREAS; ADVANTAGE SHOULD BE TAKEN OF ANY GAP IN ALLIED FORCES.

COSVN FURTHER STATES IT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR ITS LEADERSHIP TO CONTINUE TO TAKE STRONG ACTION TO SPEED THE COLLAPSE OF THE FREE WORLD. TO THIS END, ARMED AND POLITICAL FORCES IN THE TOWNS MUST BE BOLSTERED AND THE "MAIN FORCE" UNITS MUST BE KEPT AT FULL STRENGTH.

VG-055 → MANY OF THESE POINTS HAVE BEEN CORROBORATED BY AGENT REPORTS AND PW INTERROGATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE: 1. ACCORDING TO A VC CADRE, CAPTURED ON 24 AUGUST, THERE ARE TO BE NO LARGE SPECTACULAR ATTACKS ON LARGE CITIES OR MAJOR INSTALLATIONS. 2. ON 2 SEPTEMBER, A FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCE STATED THAT "THE GENERAL ATTACK IS MERELY A PROPAGANDA SLOGAN TO CAMOUFLAGE THE PRESENT TACTIC OF HEAVY HARASSMENT AND THAT A LARGE SCALE OFFENSIVE SIMILAR TO TET WILL NOT OCCUR UNTIL AT LEAST AFTER NOVEMBER 1968, IF AT ALL.

THIS NEXT SERIES OF SLIDES WILL SHOW SOME DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM
~~TRANSLATION OF THE~~
THE DOCUMENT AND BRIEFLY SHOW WHAT THE ENEMY HAS BEEN DOING WHICH TENDS
TO GIVE SOME CREDIBILITY TO THE STRATEGY. ^{THIS} THE BLACK REPRESENTS QUOTATIONS. THE
RED DEPTS WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING.

VG 2
VG 3
VG 4
VG 5
VG 6
VG 7
VG 8

PAUSE AFTER EACH VG GOES UP
TELL OPERATOR WHEN TO CHANGE

VG 055

AS THE ENEMY ACTIVITY ACCELERATED ON 18 AUGUST, OTHER OPTIONS
APPEARED OPEN TO HIM. FIRST, A MODERATE INCREASE IN THE TEMPO OF
ACTIVITY SHORT OF THAT NOTED DURING TET AND THE MAY OFFENSIVE. THE
SECOND OPTION WOULD BE A BUILDUP ^{IN INTENSITY} TO THE LEVELS NOTED DURING THOSE PREVIOUS MTKs
~~[IN THE LATTER PERIOD]~~ FINALLY, A PHASE DOWN TO THAT TEMPO NOTED
DURING JUNE/JULY AND EARLY AUGUST. AT THIS JUNCTURE, IT APPEARS
THAT HE IS FOLLOWING OPTION #1; HOWEVER, HE RETAINS THE CAPABILITY
TO SWING TOWARDS EITHER THE 2D OR 3D IF, IN HIS MIND, THEY PROVIDE
THE BEST MEANS OF ACHIEVING HIS NATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

SUMMARY OF COSVN STRATEGY

DIRECTS ALL ARMED FORCES TO MAINTAIN ACTIVITIES IN CITIES AND TOWNS ON A PERMANENT BASIS. GUERRILLA ACTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY. IT DEMANDS THAT EVERY OPPORTUNITY BE TAKEN TO LIBERATE THE COUNTRYSIDE, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF DISTRICT TOWNS, EVEN IF PART OF THE MAIN FORCES MUST BE USED FOR THE TASK.

ALL OUR ARMED FORCES MUST MAINTAIN ACTIVITIES IN CITIES AND TOWNS ON A PERMANENT BASIS. THERE SHOULD BE SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ATTACKS LAUNCHED, WHICH SHOULD BE HARD-HITTING BLOWS AIMED AT WEARING DOWN AND ANNIHILATING THE ENEMY DEFENSIVE FORCES, THE CRUEL TYRANTS, THE MASTERMINDS, AND THE ENEMY OFFICIALS OF INFRASTRUCTURE LEVEL.

SINCE 18 AUGUST

- ACTIVITY AT LEVEL THAT COULD BE SUSTAINED FOR LONG PERIOD.
- LARGE CACHES OF AMMO/SUPPLIES BEING DISCOVERED NEAR TOWNS/CITIES.
- INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT/TERRORISM HAS DOUBLED IN 4TH CORPS.

WE SHOULD TRY TO SEIZE ALL OPPORTUNITIES
TO SPEED THE LIBERATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE,
INCLUDING A NUMBER OF DISTRICT TOWNS, BY ALL
POSSIBLE MEANS, INCLUDING THE USE OF OUR
MILITARY AND POLITICAL FORCES AND EVEN A PART
OF OUR MAIN FORCES IN PROVINCES AND ZONES.

SINCE 18 AUGUST

— 65 DISTRICT/PROVINCE TOWNS ATTACKED BY
FIRE AND LIMITED GROUND PROBES.

WHEN POSSIBLE, OUR SMALL ARMED UNITS AND OUR SPECIAL ACTION, SPECIAL TASK, ARTILLERY AND SELF-DEFENSE FORCES SHOULD LAUNCH SURPRISE ATTACKS ON ENEMY KEY ORGANIZATIONS SO THAT STEP BY STEP THEY WOULD BE PARALYZED.

SINCE 18 AUGUST

- GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE IN CHOLON DESTROYED ON 6 SEPTEMBER.
- NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING IN SAIGON HIT BY 122 ROCKETS ON 22 AUGUST .
- CHIEU HOI CAMP IN 2ND CORPS HIT BY MORTARS.

WHEN THE ENEMY MASSES ITS TROOPS IN TOWNS, OUR MAJOR ARMED UNITS SHOULD ATTACK AND DISINTEGRATE THE ENEMY CIVIL GUARDS AND SELF-DEFENSE FORCES AND BREAK THE ENEMY'S GRIP SO AS TO LIBERATE THE COUNTRYSIDE.

SINCE 18 AUGUST

— ATTACKS BY FIRE

- 33 OUTPOSTS
- 46 FIRE SUPPORT BASES/BASE CAMPS
- 26 SPECIAL FORCES CAMPS

IMPORTANT COMMUNICATIONS LINES LEADING TO SAIGON MUST, BY ALL MEANS, BE CUT OFF AND DESTROYED, ESPECIALLY THE IMPORTANT BRIDGES. WE MUST HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OF THESE IMPORTANT COMMUNICATIONS LINES, ESPECIALLY NATIONAL ROUTE 4 AND THE BIEN HOA SUPER-HIGHWAY, ETC.

SINCE 18 AUGUST

— 142 INTERDICTIONS OF ROUTE 4

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OUR MAIN FORCE UNITS SHOULD ALWAYS
BE AT FULL STRENGTH.

SINCE 18 AUGUST

- 167 ENEMY INITIATED ATTACKS, MOSTLY
BY LOCAL FORCE UNITS.
- LOCAL FORCES BEING UPGRADED TO
MAIN FORCE.
- INFILTRATION OUTWEIGHS ATTRITION.
- LESS THAN HALF OF 15 BATTALION—
LEVEL ATTACKS CONDUCTED BY MAIN
FORCE.

THE MOST IMPORTANT MATTER FOR OUR
LEADERSHIP AT PRESENT IS TO MAINTAIN OUR
STRONG ACTIONS ON A PERMANENT BASIS SO AS
TO SPEED UP THE ENEMY'S COLLAPSE AND TO
WORSEN ITS FLIGHT.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: General Wheeler Briefing Statement

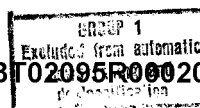
1. We have reviewed the draft of General Wheeler's briefing statement and find ourselves in substantial agreement with the statement except on two areas. The first is that the statement on supply tonnages moving into North Vietnam overstates the case. The General indicates all of the tonnages detected in rear service traffic is moving south from Thanh Hoa. This is not the case, since a great deal of the tonnages are in supply in storage areas. In addition, there are some small differences in the figures particularly for the second quarter of 1968, the DIA figures being higher than ours. These differences have since been eliminated.

2. A major problem with General Wheeler's statement is that it could bring into the open the sharp differences between JCS/DIA estimates of enemy strength and those held by CIA.

3. The JCS briefing paper understates by a significant margin the total military threat (Main and Local Forces, Administrative Services, and Guerrillas) in South Vietnam as of 31 July 1968. The JCS and CIA estimates compare as follows:

	JCS	CIA
Combat Forces:	200,000-244,000	311,000-377,000
of which NVA troops	97,000-100,000	142,000-157,000

4. The differences in the estimates of Combat Forces are too complex to be explained away at an oral briefing session. The explanation for the difference in the estimates for NVA troops, fortunately can be rationalized more easily. General Wheeler acknowledges that his figures are "hard intelligence" and that the total NVA presence is undoubtedly greater. Our figure, on the other hand, is "estimative" and not dependent on MACV's rigid



acceptance criteria. Thus, the CIA estimate allows for the acceptance of units identified in COMINT but not yet accepted by MACV. The CIA estimate also allows for the admitted incompleteness of COMINT intercept of infiltrating groups. Finally, we note that DIA's latest estimate for the North Vietnamese presence is at least 120,000 troops.



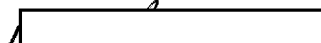
PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

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DD/OER:PVWalsh:ajs [redacted] 10 Sept 68)

Draft of General Wheeler's
briefing statement for
White House/Congressional
luncheon - 10 Sept. 1968

SITUATION IN VIETNAM

ENEMY ACTIVITY IN-COUNTRY

- Number of enemy artillery/RKT/mortar rounds:
 - April - 15,000 - 16,000 (approx)
 - May - 30,000
 - June - 25,300
 - July - 9,500
 - 26 August - 14,326
 - 1-9 September - 845 (approx)
- Total attacks: June - 288 (Jan - 409; May - 588)
 - July - 137
 - August - 261
 - 1-9 September - 45
- Total battalion-size attacks: June - 9 (Jan - 28; May - 19)
 - July - 3
 - August - 14
 - 1-9 September - 4
- Total acts of terror: June - 61 (Jan - 139; May - 113)
 - July - 60
 - August - 65
 - 1-9 September - 34 (approx)
- Total enemy KIA: June - 10,319 (Jan - 15,217; May - 24,086)
 - July - 6,332
 - August - 15,497
 - 1-9 September - 2,552
 - Last 24 hours - 255
- Total US FWF ARVN KIA - 1-8 September - 543. Last 24-hours - 93.

SUMMARY OF ENEMY ACTIVITY 1-9 SEPTEMBER

- Typhoon Bess severely hampered enemy operations in DMZ area, i.e., cave-ins of trenches, rise in malaria incidence, shortages of medicine and food.
- Flooding in Quang Tri reportedly caused an estimated loss of 60 per cent of province rice crop (in fields) and 55 per cent that already harvested and in storage.

I CORPS

- Enemy activity decreased generally. Attacks by fire primary enemy effort.
- Indications of enemy plans for further offensive activity.
- Artillery and mortar fire increased in effort to maintain pressure on Allied positions along Route 9.
- Increase in terrorist activity in Quang Nam Province in lieu of major assaults.
- Low level of activity in coastal plains of Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces.
- 2d NVA Division elements possibly moving northward suffered heavy casualties west of Tam Ky.

- Friendly operations hampering freedom of movement.

II CORPS

- Enemy activity characterized by widely scattered incidents of harassment and terrorism.
- Light casualties and damage:
 - The Dak Seang facilities, Duc Lap CIDG camp, and the Lam Dong Province District Capital of Di Linh subjected to ground attacks.
- Fire attacks occurred at Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang on the coast.

III CORPS

- Ground contacts in vicinity of Trang Bang in Hau Nghia and Rach Kien in Long An Province.
- Battalion-size contact occurred outside Can Duoc.
- Sporadic harassing attacks by fire continue.
- Bien Hoa Air Base rocketed/mortared on 7 and 8 September.
- In Saigon terrorist activities are on the increase directed primarily at government buildings and civilians.

IV CORPS

- Enemy activity at a low level.
- Most consisted of small scale mortar attacks and terrorist acts against province and district towns.
- Ground assault against Gio Duc District Town. The district compound was penetrated.
- ARVN operations in Kien Phong Province resulted in 143 enemy killed in the past 2 to 3 days.
- A regimental size unit, formerly in the Can Tho area, deployed southwest to Base Area 480 and thereby decreased the threat in the Can Tho City-Binh Thuy Airfield complex.

MANEUVER BATTALIONS

	I	II	III	IV	Totals
Enemy	88	50	62	32	232
Friendly	97	64	98	45	304

GENERAL

- RVNAF mobilization proceeding rapidly; now have 812,000 plus 42,000 CIDG (169,000 increase since 1 January 1968).
- Self Defense Forces - 71,000 people now armed; 80,000 more proposed. 30,000 now in Saigon Civil Defense groups.
- Territorial security improved. Since Tet RF strength up 30 per cent (to 208,500); FF up nine per cent (to 167,500); Police up 7,000; RD Cadre up 7,000.

- 5.5 per cent increase in GVN controlled territory since Tet.

PRESENT CAPABILITIES AND VULNERABILITIES OF RVNAF

- ARVNAF is not capable of defeating the Communist forces in-country, either militarily or through counter-insurgency efforts. ARVNAF is capable of maintaining control over major population centers, along selected lines of communication, and in those areas where they deploy large elements of their forces. The capability to do these simultaneously depends upon the expanse of area concerned and the extent of enemy pressure.

- RVNAF capabilities are strained by organizational deficiencies and by inadequate communication and intelligence. The cohesiveness of their fighting forces has occasionally been split by political alignment and local allegiance. Although not in evidence at this time, the possibility of such future occurrences cannot be overlooked. South Vietnam would be incapable of effective resistance to full-scale attack by Army of North Vietnam (NVA) or Chinese Communist military forces or even VC subversion without massive and direct outside assistance.

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RICE SITUATION IN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM (C)

North Vietnam had the worst 5th month (May 1968) rice harvest in 10 years because of cold damp weather during the growing season. The 5th month harvest (1/3 of the total crop) was reduced by 15 percent so that total harvest for the year may be 10 percent below that of last year and 15 percent below normal. The normal yearly harvest is 4.5 million tons. The flooding resulting from Tropical Storm ROSE in mid-August 1968 likely will reduce the yield of the 10th month (October 1968) crop, but the extent of the damage is unknown. The plants are in the early stages of growth and vulnerable to drowning. If these plants are submerged for 10-15 days, they will be lost. More information is necessary before a definitive judgment on effects of the flooding can be made.

Rice production in South Vietnam this year will be above that of 1967; so far, it appears that tropical storms will not affect the harvest except locally in the far northern provinces which are rice deficit areas. Transportation difficulties, however, will make more imports necessary this year than previously planned.

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9 September 1968 - 1000 EDST

INFILTRATION OF NVN PERSONNEL

- Continues at reduced level from peak months: March - May.
- Fewer personnel entered pipeline in June - September to date.

? OK if entering pipeline?

Moving South

March - 25,300
 April - 33,400 (includes 15 arty-type units - AAA, two rocket
 May - 30,400 groups -- plus some armor)
 June - 17,400
 July - 19,000
 August - 7,300
 September - 2,200

- Total entering SVN 31 March - 31 August: 125,000 - 136,200 (lower figure includes 10% attrition).

- 338 infiltration groups (est 180,500) detected in infiltration system since 1 Nov 67. 245 groups have had time to reach SVN (122,500 attrited).

INFILTRATION OF NVN SUPPLIES

- Truck sightings, NVN lower route packages:

April - 3,300 OK July - 4,900 OK
 May - 5,100 OK August - 3,340 (WX)
 June - 3,700 OK 1-2 September - 135 (WX)

- Truck sightings, Laos Panhandle:

June - 2,400
 July - 3,500
 August - 965 (WX)

- Supply tonnage south from Thanh Hoa:
 (5-month average prior 31 March - 3,300 ST).

April - 8,000 ST 226/215 July - 7,500 ST 241/237
 May - 7,600 ST 245/238 August - 6,050 ST 195/191
 June - 9,700 ST 323/274 1-4 September - 600 ST

(90% are POL and ammo)

NVN RECOVERY

- Doumer Bridge serviceable, rail and motor.
- Electric power: 50% capacity. 8 of 9 plants partial operations.
- Coal Exports:

Jan - Mar - 40,000 MT/MO
 Apr - Jul - 64,000 MT/MO
 August - 41,300 MT/MO

- Ship turn-around time: Aug 67 - 33 days
 Jul 68 - 25 days
 Aug 68 - 33 days

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9 Sep 68

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As of 31 July 1968 the total military threat in South Vietnam (combat, admin services, guerrillas) numbered between 200,000-244,000 troops. Of these, at least 97-100,000 are NVA. Based on the heavy infiltration and the relative low-level of enemy activity prior to 18 August, the total NVA presence is undoubtedly greater than the hard intelligence based figure above.

Unit strengths are as on attached page.

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AS OF 9 Sep 68

SVN GROUND ORDER OF BATTLE

VC/NVA ¹					ARVN ²			
CTZ	DIV	REGT ^{3/}	MANEUVER ^{3/} BN		DIV	REGT OR BDE	MANEUVER BN	
I	-	3	21	67	2	7	35	
II	-	-	15	35	2	6	28	
III	2	10	34	28	4	9	56	
IV	-	2	32	-	3	9	42	
TOTAL	2	15	102	130	11	31	161	
GRAND TOTAL	10	64	232					

- Notes: 1. Includes CONFIRMED/PROBABLE/POSSIBLE
 2. Does NOT include Regional and Popular Forces
 3. Border Area units are reflected to better portray the military threat.

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10 June 1968

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: CIA: The Director, Mr. Richard Helms
Mr. Paul V. Walsh

JCS: The Chairman, General Earle G. Wheeler
Lt. Gen. George S. Brown
Executive Col. D.P. McAuliffe

DIA: The Director, General Joseph Carroll



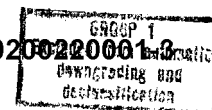
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1. On the morning of 10 June, a meeting was held in General Wheeler's office to discuss the report prepared by CIA for the President on "North Vietnam's Ability to Withstand Manpower Attrition". The President had also requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff comment on this report.

2. The report was transmitted to the JCS for comments on 4 June. The JCS comment was a statement of nonconcurrence because of CIA use of enemy strength figures which were at odds with those held by MACV. This meeting was requested by Mr. Helms so that the CIA position and the need to use strength figures could be explained to the Chairman.

3. Mr. Helms opened the meeting by telling the Chairman that in accordance with the oral agreement reached on 3 May 1968, Mr. Helms was consulting with the Chairman before he made use of the CIA estimates of enemy strengths. Mr. Helms then asked Mr. Walsh to state our case for using these strength figures. Mr. Walsh outlined our general case briefly and the group then listened to a rebuttal from General Carroll. After a discussion of the merits of the argument, Mr. Walsh proposed that the CIA draft be amended to exclude much of the details on strength figures but to include two fundamental estimates which were essential to the study. It was also agreed that notation would be carried that these estimates were higher than those of MACV because they were based on estimated techniques rather than order of battle procedures. These were the estimates of the strength of the total insurgency base and the estimate for the number of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam. General Wheeler accepted this proposal.

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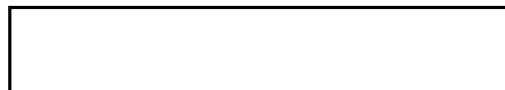
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4. On the basis of this agreement Mr. Helms said that CIA would proceed with the publication of the report. He also said that because of the sensitivity of the figures and the fact that CIA and DIA were working to resolve the disagreement, that the dissemination of the report would be very tightly controlled. It was agreed that on the basis of this agreement the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the report would be redrafted by General Carroll and would be included as an attachment to the report when it was transmitted to the President.




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PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Distribution:

Orig. & 2 - DD/OER

DD/OER:PVWalsh:ajs  (22 Jul 68)

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13 MAY 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: MACV Response to Wheeler Cable on
Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam

1. I understand MACV's response to the Wheeler cable makes the following points:

a. Guerrillas - SNIE 14.3 states the right case on this category. There is only one kind; MACV includes all the significant ones; therefore no need to split them.

b. Attrition - Washington is under a misconception. MACV's methodology doesn't underestimate the forces. Moreover, MACV has independent checks - i.e., RITZ reports.

c. Irregulars - No need to quantify.

d. Political - MACV says the problem is one of methodology not definition. MACV resists quantifying support staffs for it gives them a significance they don't warrant.

e. Finally, MACV says he is always ready to reexamine. Let the two Washington agencies do their redefinitions and present their resulting changes. MACV and CINCPAC would be glad to comment and if agreement isn't reached, General Wheeler will at least have a statement of everyone's views.

2. I am informed that General Carroll has alerted his staff to be ready to discuss the MACV response early next week.

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PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

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Executive Registry

68-2258

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3 May 1968

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: CIA: The Director, Mr. Richard Helms
Mr. Paul V. Walsh

JCS: The Chairman, General Earle G. Wheeler
Lt. Gen. George S. Brown
Executive Col. D.P. McAuliffe
Maj. Gen. William E. Depuy
Col. A. C. Edmunds

DIA: The Director, General Joseph Carroll

25X1

1. This meeting convened at 1030 on 3 May 1968. It was called by General Wheeler in response to Mr. Helms' offer to brief the Chairman on the community problems in estimating enemy strengths.

2. Mr. Helms opened the meeting by explaining generally the inability of the intelligence community to reach agreement on estimates of enemy strengths in South Vietnam. He pointed out that in addition to differences in estimates on agreed OB categories, there was a fundamental difference on whether certain categories of forces -- the so-called irregular groups -- should be quantified and included in the estimates.

3. Mr. Walsh gave a brief run-down on the CIA concept of an insurgency base and the elements contained in it, and presented a comparison of the CIA and MACV estimates.

4. General Carroll and Mr. Walsh discussed the various problem areas in the estimates, the points of disagreement and possible alternatives for their resolution.

5. The consensus of the meeting is summarized in the following points:

~~SECRET~~

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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a. These estimates have a high degree of political sensitivity and all concerned should exercise the utmost discretion in dealing with them and controlling their dissemination.

b. There is a real need to present these estimates in such a way that the combat threat is clearly distinguished from political or irregular threats. The qualitative differences within groups should also be considered and probably new terminology needs to be created.

c. The disagreement on some elements -- e.g., Political Infrastructure -- could probably be eliminated if the terms were redefined.

d. The current method of attrition, its shortcomings, and the impact this has on maintaining strength estimates is in need of a basic overhaul.

e. The requirement that monthly OB reports be published is a basic contributor to the confusion and problems associated with strength estimates.

6. General Carroll was instructed to draft for General Wheeler's signature a message to MACV indicating that there are a number of soft areas in the estimates which warrant immediate investigation, and making the following points:

a. MACV should examine the entire question of attrition with a view to devising better methods.

b. Consideration should be given to differentiating the combat threat between full-time and part-time guerrillas.

c. Consideration should be given to the best means of presenting and quantifying the elements not included in the military OB.

d. The question of definition of Political Infrastructure should be reexamined.

7. It was agreed that all concerned must go back to the drawing board and that CIA and DIA would cooperate fully in working out new formats and definitions and resolving existing differences.

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8. Mr. Helms agreed that he would withhold dissemination of the CIA figures pending completion of this reexamination.

9. General Wheeler agreed to take steps to reduce MACV's OB reporting requirements, particularly those generated by OSD/SA.

PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

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Distribution:

Orig. - DCI

1 - DDI

2 - OD/OER

1 - Ch/D/I, Ch/I/SV

OD/OER:PVWalsh:w [] 3 May 68)

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~~SECRET~~
CIA

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2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: ~~DCI~~ *Mr. Walsh*

Attached is a memo of conversation on our meeting with General Wheeler, as I understood the outcome.

✓

[Redacted Signature]

PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Attachment:
As stated above.

PVW
Good - Thank you
mt

6 May 1968
(DATE)

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FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

DCI

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PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Attachment:
As stated above.

6 May 1968

Distribution:

Orig. - Addressee w/att.

1 - DD/I w/att.

2 - OD/OER w/att.

1 - Ch/D/I, I/SV w/att only

DD/OER:PVW:ajs [] 6 May 68)

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CIA IN

3 May 1968

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Mr. Paul V. Walsh

JCS: The Chairman, General Earle G. Wheeler
Lt. Gen. George S. Brown
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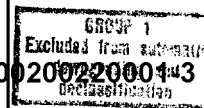
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PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Distribution:

Orig. - DCI

1 - DDI

② - OD/OER

1 - Ch/D/I, Ch/I/SV

OD/OER:PVWalsh: [] (3 May 68)

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17 April 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with David K. Kleinberg,
(OSD/SA)

1. This afternoon at 2:30p.m. Mr. Kleinberg, OSD/Systems Analysis, called to inquire about the course of events that will follow now that the conference on enemy strengths had concluded. He said that his office has a vital interest in the figures on enemy strengths because they are so key to the support they provide the Secretary of Defense. He also volunteered the information that the working level over there, on the basis of reports from Jerry Bush (an observer at the conference), feels that the CIA position is pretty much the proper position.

2. He wanted to know what kind of reports would result from the conference. I told him that the only report planned was an official conference report that was in the process of preparation and would be submitted to Mr. Helms. He also asked for copies of all the papers tabled at the conference. I told him that the only paper tabled at the conference was the draft assessment prepared for the DCI and that this assessment would be revised to the extent that CIA thought its figures should change as a result of the conference. He asked me what the disposition of the papers would be and I told him I had no idea. He also asked if these reports would be seen by Mr. Helms in his capacity as the Director of CIA or the Director of Central Intelligence. I said that it was in the latter capacity.

3. Mr. Kleinberg went on to say that since this was an extremely important issue that OSD/SA feels that they should inform Mr. Clifford of these developments and recommend to him that he communicate with Mr. Helms asking what Mr. Helms' position was on enemy strengths. I told Mr. Kleinberg that I thought this would be premature and ill-advised since at the moment Mr. Helms does not have a position on the issue of enemy strengths and the purpose of the conference was to provide him with the data he felt he needed to decide this position.

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Mr. Kleinberg then agreed that it would not be proper for OSD/SA or SECDEF to initiate any action at this time but requested that we inform OSD/SA when a report had been made to Mr. Helms. I told him that I would keep his request in mind and consider it when I received instructions from Mr. Helms on how he wanted these matters handled.

PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Distribution:

Orig. - ADDI

Ch/Exec Staff, O/DD/I

1 - DD/OER

DD/OER:PVWalsh:a [] 17 Apr 68)

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16 April 68

Enemy Strength Conference

I. Status

1. There can be no agreed estimate.
2. MACV and CINCPAC have not budged from any of their pre-conference figures, with the exception of an SI element that could be added to the Main/Local Force OB because of the time lag. They also reject completely the idea of estimating any magnitudes for the irregular elements of an insurgency base.
3. DIA accepts CIA estimates for Self-Defense Forces and Assault Youth. They stand with MACV on Guerrillas and Political Infrastructure. They have an estimate between that of MACV and CIA for Administrative Services.
4. State and NSA are in general agreement with CIA although for some categories they do not at this time want to buy a figure because they don't feel competent to evaluate specific numbers.

II. What to do.

1. It would take a direct command from General Wheeler to put MACV in line and I am not sanguine as to the effect of such an edict.
2. DIA has made a major move in breaking away from MACV on two and possibly three categories. I believe they would be responsive to pressure from the DCI to get in line on at least the Administrative Services and possibly the Political Infrastructure.
3. Mr. Helms should persist in his declaration that he will publish a report giving his position as a matter of formal record.

III. Questions

1. Does Mr. Helms want the draft report shown to DIA or to other USIB members before submission to him.
2. Does he want a report that simply presents the estimate or does he want it to include the methodologies used to derive them: on any event if the final report is to be a USIB report it should be the former.
3. Does he want the draft report to include separate statements prepared by DIA and by MACV of their position on the overall estimate and each element of the estimate.

/Original hand carried by DD/OER-16 Apr 68)

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4. Does Mr. Helms intend to get the USIB imprimatur on his report.

5. If he wants these position statements, does he want them at the time I submit my report, or after he sends it to USIB members for comment.

6. Would he prefer that I prepare a summary conference report stating the outcome of the conference and outlining each principal's position on the estimate? If so, should I coordinate this report with the principals before submission.

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10 APR 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Special Intelligence Security Staff

SUBJECT: Request for Briefing of [redacted]
[redacted]

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1. It is requested that 1st [redacted]
be briefed for SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE.

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2. [redacted] is attending a conference* which is being
held here at Headquarters Building for one week, 10-16 April
1968, and it is necessary that he be briefed for SI.

3. At the conclusion of the Conference, it is requested
that [redacted] be debriefed.

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[redacted]
PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Distribution:

Orig. & 2 - Addressee

1 - DD/OER

DD/OER:PVWalsh:aj [redacted] 10 Apr 68)

*DCI Assessment of Enemy Strength.

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1 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for
Intelligence

SUBJECT : CIA and MACV Estimates of Self-Defense
Forces and Assault Youths in South
Vietnam

1. During the period early 1968 to the spring of 1973, CIA estimated that the Communist force structure in South Vietnam included 80,000 to 120,000 self-defense forces* and 10,000 to 20,000 assault youths. The CIA figure for self-defense forces was based upon a document captured in 1966, which indicated that the ratio of guerrillas to self-defense forces was approximately one to one. Analysis of captured documents was also the basis of the assault youth estimate. Lack of data on both forces prevented the development of more comprehensive methodologies.

2. In the September 1967 study MACV estimated the number of self-defense forces at about 120,000-- a figure subsequently used as the upper end of the CIA range. In October 1969, MACV published another estimate of 80,000 to 110,000 based reportedly on a more in-depth examination of captured documents, interrogation reports, national police files and agent reports. MACV did not consider the assault youths a military threat and therefore did not quantify them.

3. The existence and approximate size of both these irregular forces was never really a major issue. MACV, however, did not include them in their military order-of-battle estimates because it believed that they did not constitute a real military threat to Allied forces. In

*Although a CIA estimate of 100,000 self-defense forces was presented to the Community at the April 1968 order-of-battle conference, it was adjusted to 80,000 to 120,000 during the meeting. This was done to obtain the acceptance of the figure by DIA who felt that the single number implied too great a degree of accuracy.

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the 1967-69 period, CIA held the opposite view because the self-defense forces were a major source of manpower for the guerrillas and the assault youths clearly were supporting Communist combat forces.

4. By the fall of 1970 improvements in pacification and the general run-down in Communist guerrilla forces resulted in CIA no longer considering these irregular forces as a significant military threat to South Vietnam. This fact, coupled with the almost complete lack of data on these forces, resulted in CIA generally omitting them from Agency estimates of Communist military forces in South Vietnam. It was not until the spring of 1973, however, that they were officially dropped from our order-of-battle. The only known acknowledgement of this appeared in CIA/OER's factbook of military data on Indochina of April 1973, and a policy briefing memorandum, dated 24 April 1973, (draft attached).



25X1

Acting Chief
Middle East-South Asia Branch, SR/EF

Attachment
As Stated

CONFIDENTIAL

S - 1001
24 April 1973
Policy Briefing Request
Prepared by 25X1

MEMORANDUM

Retrospective View of Communist Force
Levels in South VietnamIntroduction

1. In the period ^{from} late 1967 ^{through} early 1973, CIA and MACV officially held different views on the strength and structure of Communist forces targeted against South Vietnam. These forces include personnel in regular combat, administrative services, and irregular (i.e., guerrillas, self-defense and assault youths) units as well as the VC infrastructure. Reasons for the different views between the two organizations are the result of differing methodological and conceptual approaches to estimating the size of Communist forces. As a result, our individual estimates of VC/NVA force levels have varied over the years with respect to the number of units carried in the order of battle (OB) and their strengths. The following discussion attempts to identify specific areas of disagreement by category of forces and indicate in the light of hindsight if subsequent evidence has substantiated the CIA or MACV estimates. No attempt is made to compare

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specific strength figures over time, except in the most general sense, since there are several estimates by each ^{organization} ~~originator~~ for any given date, due to the process of continually refining estimates as new information became available. In any event, specific order of battle comparisons are not the subject of this memorandum.

Regular Combat Forces

2. Differences in CIA and MACV estimates of Communist regular combat forces revolved basically around varying methodological approaches. MACV estimates generally have required "hard" intelligence data requiring multiple confirmation before units could be accepted into the order of battle. Thus, the MACV estimates, particularly its collateral order of battle, were subject to a considerable time lag and thus did not reflect real-time estimates. This was alleviated, but not entirely corrected, in May 1969 when MACV first began publishing an all-source order of battle. CIA's approach to the problem, on the other hand, was more of an estimative nature and allowed for greater flexibility and more timely adjustments to actual changes in the Communist's force structure based on all-source intelligence. Consequently, ^{prior to 1969} CIA developed ~~over the last several years~~ an add-on approach to the MACV order of battle in order to

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compensate for those areas for which hard evidence was incomplete or unavailable. The CIA approach was essentially centered around five additions to the MACV order of battle.

These were:

- New or previously unidentified units, detected in COMINT or collateral material, which did not yet meet MACV's criteria for acceptance. The magnitude of this add-on generally ranged from 5,000 to 10,000 combat troops.
- An average battalion strength adjustment based on collateral evidence to compensate for the differences between the apparently low estimates in the MACV holdings. This methodology yielded an ^{on the order of} additional 2,000 to ^{additional} 5,000 troops.
- Combat support units integral to divisions and regiments which were either omitted from or ostensibly understated in strength. This category generally added some 2,000 to 7,000 more personnel to the MACV ^{or} particularly in the 1967-68 period.

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-- Compensation for the omission from the
OB of small specialized units subordinate
to province, district, and city echelons
which were contained in captured documents
but did not meet MACV's acceptance criteria.
This addition was generally on the order
of 5,000 to 10,000 personnel.

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5. The inclusion of those ground combat units located between the DMZ and Dong Hoi in North Vietnam, which were believed to targeted against South Vietnam. This number of North Vietnamese combat forces in this area have fluctuated between zero and as many as 25,000 troops during the ~~1967-73~~ ¹⁹⁶⁷⁻⁷³ period. *This add-on continues to be used by CIA*

In retrospect, the CIA ^{inclusions} ~~estimates for adding~~ new or previously unidentified units into the OB -- which at the time did not meet MACV's acceptance criteria -- have proven *for* ~~in~~ ^{the} most part to be justified. ^{The majority} Most of these units were subsequently picked up in the MACV OB. During 1968, *for* ~~examples of this included~~ the 308th Infantry Division, the 27th Infantry and 96th Artillery Regiments, as well as a number of units of battalion size. ^{were accepted by MACV several months after sufficient evidence was available for inclusion into the CIA} With the establishment of a MACV all-source OB in May 1969, the addition ^{and previously unidentified} of new units to the MACV OB became more timely and the size of this CIA add-on category was accordingly reduced. Although as late as 1972 CIA was still accepting the presence in South Vietnam of some North Vietnamese units more quickly than MACV -- e.g., the 270th Infantry Regiment --

OB.

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a large part of this ~~current~~ time-lag difference probably was more the result ^{from} of MACV analysts having to clear acceptance of the unit through channels ^{rather than} because of ^{the} differing MACV and CIA analytical judgments.

Collateral sources also have tended to validate the CIA position with regard to the addition of a higher number of combat support units integral to divisions and regiments. In early 1968, for example, evidence supported ^{in the CIA OB} the inclusion of at least 6 combat support battalions subordinate to the NVA 325C Division and 2 additional support battalions of the VC 9th Division ~~to the MACV OB~~.

Non-ellation These units were subsequently accepted into the MACV OB. *continued to be a*

estimated of personnel assigned
Currently there is ~~still a~~ significant difference between MACV and CIA strengths for combat support to major Communist units in South Vietnam. *This is particularly true*

In Military Regions 3 and 4 where, for example, MACV carried in its last published OB for January 1973 five NVA infantry divisions with a combined strength of less than 10,000 ^{maneuver and combat support} troops. CIA, on the other hand, carries these same units at approximately 20,000 men. The total difference in strength results from the fact that CIA carries not only the maneuver but also the combat support strengths of these divisions at about twice the size of as

based the judgement
CIA ~~still believes in the validity of its previous judgement~~ based on in-depth analysis of captured enemy documents that about 40 percent of the strength of an infantry regiment or division are:

combat support personnel and the remainder are maneuver troops.

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that listed in the MACV OB. The lower MACV figures results from their attriting the units more heavily in 1972 and allowing for less replacements than CIA.

Verification of the existence of the ^{province, district and city} small-special-^{level} ized units has not been as fully substantiated as the

above add-ons. ^{consequently} We still believe, however, that they ^{their strengths} probably ^{more substantiated} continue to be understated in both the CIA and ^{so in the} MACV OBs. This results from the fact that there is no

COMINT verification of these units and that they have been ^{information on these units has dropped precipitously since} identified in collateral sources less and less since the

1968-69 period.

The CIA add-on for average infantry battalion strength is difficult to verify in retrospect, ^{an} but analysis of captured documents, particularly for the period up until 1969, clearly indicated that some upward adjustment to the MACV OB was ^{justified} in order. The fundamental problem with the MACV methodology was insufficient allowance was made for the Communists' capability to replenish unit strengths after suffering losses. ^{this remains a problem with the methodology} After-battle loss counts were subtracted from the MACV strength listing of a particular unit, and, consequently, over long periods of time the units' strength on the average declined. During the period March 1968 through July 1968, for example, the average

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strength of infantry battalions as carried in the MACV
OB of ~~these dates~~ decreased by 5 percent. Evidence from
enemy documents, prisoners, and infiltration data indicated
that average battalion ^{Strength} ~~did not fall as shown in the MACV~~
data but, in fact, increased. ~~Thus~~, CIA compensated for
this strengthening of enemy units by developing indepen-
dent average battalion strength estimates (derived mainly
from captured documents and prisoner reports) and adding
the derived differences to MACV's listing of average
battalion strengths. ^{Burning} ^{homework} ^{impaired} By 1969, however, evidence suggested
that the Communists' average battalion strengths had
actually diminished and the size of the CIA add-on was
accordingly reduced. Moreover, by late 1970 information
available on unit strengths began ^{decrease} to seriously fall off
^{and} and it became ^{very difficult to} ~~more difficult~~ ^{to} ~~less~~ meaningful ^{to} derive
a separate add-on for this category.

In addition to these methodological difference in
estimating the Communist regular combat threat, there is ~~as~~
a conceptual one as well. CIA considers those ground
combat units between the DMZ and Dong Hoi in its total
estimate of VC/NVA forces targeted against South Vietnam.

~~On the other hand~~, MACV did not disagree with the presence
of units in the area, but nonetheless employed a more
restrictive approach based on national boundaries for

estimating the military threat to South Vietnam. ^{Because} Many of the
units in this area subsequently deployed into South Vietnam or fired
on ~~targets~~ allied targets from 7 - miles of the DMZ. There appears
to be some justification for including units in this area in the OB
estimates of Communist forces.

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CIA is responsible for the problem

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Administrative Services

CIA and MACV have also used different methodological and conceptual approaches in estimating the Communist administrative services structure in South Vietnam. In contrast to the MACV "hard evidence" approach, CIA believed that collateral sources and the size of the Communist combat force ^{implied} required a support structure much higher than that indicated in the MACV OB. ^{contained} As a result ^{of this factor,} CIA estimated the aggregate number of Communist administrative services personnel in the 1967-68 period on the basis of a ratio of such forces to VC/NVA combat personnel from the district to the COSVN level. This ratio was derived from analysis of captured enemy documents which gave such comparative strengths which were then generalized on a countrywide basis. By 1969, both CIA and MACV had refined their methodologies for estimating administrative services. MACV, in CIA's judgment, however, continued to significantly understate the number of such personnel subordinate to districts and provinces based on analysis of captured enemy documents. ^{However, during the 1967-68 period,} Previously, MACV had for a while excluded ~~all~~ district administrative services personnel from their order of battle, although by definition they should have been included. With the Allied cross-border

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operations in mid-1970, captured enemy documents revealed that the Communist administrative services structure was in fact understated by both organizations and the two estimates were adjusted upward to reflect this new information. The new data tended to confirm ^{original CIA} earlier estimates by CIA on the aggregate size of the administrative services structure which ^{estimate} had been reduced in the process of reaching ^{achieving} agreed ^{Coordinated} Intelligence Communist estimates in Washington. Although MACV's and CIA's current estimates of the absolute number Administrative Services personnel targeted against South Vietnam appear relatively close, the estimates on a region by region show greater variation. These differences result from the difficulty in determining ^{any of} where to account for VC/NVA forces based in Cambodia and southern Laos, but whose areas of operations are adjacent to or straddle the border in support of Communist combat forces in South Vietnam. One ^{For} example ~~of this~~ is the fact that the 5,000 difference between the ¹⁹⁷² MACV and CIA estimates of administrative service personnel in Military Region 1 is due almost entirely to the fact that MACV ^{did} does not appear ^{to include} ~~(to carry in its order of battle)~~ any General Directorate of Rear Services units which moved into northern

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in South Vietnam area
Line The presence of this unit indicated in COMINT documents
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not active since MACV changed to 6th Air Division but
only in the north. They should be counted in the OC for South Vietnam.
show conclusion

South Vietnam from south Laos in mid-1972 to support the Communist offensive. Moreover, in Military Region 3 MACV carries some 15,000 more administrative services personnel than CIA. This results from MACV still carrying the old rear service groups which deployed into Cambodia in reaction to the cross-border operations in 1970. Most of these groups, however, have since been disbanded and reorganized into other groups within Cambodia as evidence both in COMINT and collateral sources where CIA currently carries them in its Cambodian OB.

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Guerrilla Forces

A major area of disagreement between CIA and MACV estimates of the Communist force structure has been with the guerrillas -- the highest echelon of Viet Cong irregular forces. As soldiers subordinate to the village and hamlet level, the guerrillas operate within local jurisdictions and are often not fully armed or as militarily effective as the Communist regular forces. CIA has always believed that the estimates of guerrilla strength carried by MACV have been too low. MACV listings of guerrilla strength were derived from several programs including the Big MACV collection program -- essentially a survey conducted at the district level by US military advisors. From this a monthly series was tabulated for the entire country. CIA developed its own estimates of guerrilla strength with the use of captured documents giving strength fixes for a given time and village and hamlet units. Statistical extrapolative techniques were then applied to derive countrywide estimates for several points in time.

The degree of divergence between the CIA and the MACV estimates was especially large in the earlier years, but by late 1969 the gap had been considerably reduced. In mid-1967, for example, the MACV OB carried a total guerrilla

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strength of 65,000 compared to a range of 110,000-135,000 estimated by CIA. By September 1969, however, MACV listed 50,000 while CIA had lowered its estimate to 50,00-80,000. The most current figures carried by MACV for 1973 is 26,000; CIA estimates a range of 40,000-60,000. It should be noted that the difference here is not as great as it may appear. The MACV estimate reportedly excludes one category -- secret or covert guerrillas -- which CIA includes and estimates to be on the order of about 10,000.

Validation of both CIA and MACV past estimates of the guerrillas is exceedingly difficult. The passage of time has not provided ^{few} ~~any~~ new insights into the size and capabilities of the guerrillas as both captured document and US sources in the field have diminished in recent years. CIA believes, nonetheless, that the higher estimated ranges depicted actual guerrilla strength levels more realistically than the MACV OB, particularly in the earlier year, and that the current differences are of lesser significance than in the past -- at least in terms of military capabilities.

CIA in 1969 was able to validate its current estimate within a fairly high level of statistical confidence.

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Other Irregulars

In addition to the guerrillas, there are a number of other irregulars, namely self-defense forces and assault youths. Since 1967, lack of information on these forces has prevented any reliable independent estimate of their numbers. What little evidence is available, however, suggests that the number of Self Defense forces previously may have been on about a one-to-one basis with the guerrilla forces. The strength of Assault Youth groups is believed to never have been significantly large and probably numbered only about 10,000 to 20,000.

The existence and approximate size of these other irregulars was never an issue but MACV did not include them in their OB because it's believed that they did not represent a real military threat. ^{to the RVN.} In the 1967-68 period, CIA held the opposite view because the self-defense forces were a major source of manpower for the guerrillas and the assault youths clearly were supporting Communist combat forces in South Vietnam. Because of improvements in pacification and the general run-down in the enemy's ^{guerrilla} other forces ^{since then} levels, ^{these forces also} these forces are no longer considered ^{by CIA} to be a significant ^{military} threat to the GVN. ~~at this time.~~

VC Infrastructure

In addition to the above Communists' military forces, there is a large number of enemy political and administrative personnel in South Vietnam, termed the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI). The VCI are defined, according to MACV, as the political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek to control the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the control structure of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), which includes a command and control apparatus at the national level (the Central Office for South Vietnam) and the leadership and administration of a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam), both of which extend down to the hamlet level.

Estimates of the strength of the VCI are exceedingly difficult to make. *and very, except in the most general terms,* One of the reasons is the varying number of definitions that can be used to describe what is commonly termed the VCI. The definition used by MACV* is quite vague and leaves open the question of exactly who is and who is not included. CIA's estimate on the other hand uses a broader definition on what constitutes the VCI. As a result, the CIA estimate, historically has been

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higher than MACV's, particularly in the more recent period, CIA believes that captured ^{enemy} documents ^{clearly} indicate that there are ^arelatively large numbers of VC penetration agents targeted against the South Vietnamese government, military, and security organizations which have never been accounted for in ^{the MACV} estimates. ~~made by MACV.~~ Moreover, MACV has been attriting the strength of the VCI over time, but ^{is not believed to have made sufficient allowance for} ~~has not addressed~~ the significant number of replacement cadre who have been infiltrated ^{into} from North Vietnam, as well as those who have been recruited by the Viet Cong in the south. Because of this, CIA's estimate of the VCI currently is approximately twice as great as that of MACV's.

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

Revised Estimates Of VC/NVA Forces In South Vietnam

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ER IM 70-102
July 1970

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
July 1970

ER IM 70-102
July 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Revised Estimates Of VC/NVA Forces
In South Vietnam

Introduction

From the intelligence point of view, a significant premium gained from Allied operations in Cambodia is the large volume of captured documents -- some 6 tons -- which along with prisoner interrogations are providing a great deal of new information on the size and structure of enemy forces. The Cambodian documents are particularly valuable because they provide, often for the first time, new and detailed documentary information on an enemy force which for all practical purposes was operating in denied areas. This is particularly true in regard to Administrative Service troops (all staff and support personnel not subordinate to combat units). Since these units operated for the most part in Cambodian territory, or seldom encountered Allied troops, knowledge of their strength and structure has always been a major gap in the community's understanding of the enemy force structure.

The Cambodian documents have also provided useful data on the current strengths of enemy combat units. The take of captured documents is quite closely related to the degree to which Allied and enemy forces engage in ground combat. During the past year or so, the sharp decline in the rate of combat in South Vietnam also brought about a reduction in the availability of captured documents.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and coordinated internally in CIA and externally with the Defense Intelligence Agency. DIA is in agreement with the new estimates presented in this memorandum, with the exception of the estimate of Guerrilla forces.

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Consequently, the data base used for making current estimates of enemy force levels was becoming increasingly inadequate and untimely. The newly captured documents have not only tended to confirm previous estimates of combat forces -- not more than five previously unidentified battalion-size combat units, totaling less than 1,500 troops, have been uncovered -- but also are proving to be particularly useful in providing information on their recent strengths.

Preliminary analysis of these documents, as well as information on the redeployment of Communist forces resulting from the Cambodian operations and an on-going review of Guerrilla forces, make it clear that a revision of estimates of enemy force levels is in order. This memorandum presents an initial judgment of the magnitude of these revisions. The new estimates are necessarily preliminary and will undoubtedly be further refined as exploitation of captured documents and prisoner interrogations is completed. Nevertheless, it is believed that most of the significant new material has been received in Washington and that the final impact of these documents will not change the estimates significantly. The Defense Intelligence Agency has reviewed this memorandum and is in agreement with the discussion and strength estimates presented except for the revised Guerrilla strength estimate. A statement of DIA's view of Guerrilla strengths is presented on page 21 of Appendix A.

This memorandum first reviews the threat concept used for estimating enemy strength and presents a comparison of the existing and the revised estimates. It then discusses the nature and significance of the revisions. Next, the memorandum discusses the revised estimates for such major commands as COSVN and the B-3 Front. Finally, the memorandum presents the results of additional analysis which has resulted in a change in estimates of enemy Administrative Services subordinate to other Regions and Fronts, the number of enemy forces deployed in Cambodia, and the Guerrilla forces.

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APPENDIX A

Revised Estimate of Guerrilla Forces*

1. The Vietnamese Communist Guerrillas -- those soldiers subordinate to the village and hamlet Party authorities -- represent a longstanding threat to Allied control of the countryside and to future pacification efforts. Unlike the Main and Local Forces, the Guerrillas are loosely organized and usually serve part-time. Although the Guerrillas have a limited offensive role, they generally operate within the confines of the local village or hamlet, serving as a static defense force and enforcer of village and hamlet Party policy. Quantification of the Guerrilla force structure always has been exceedingly difficult. Individual units are small, usually consisting of squads and platoons of varying strengths. Moreover, they are concentrated largely in areas that have long been occupied by Viet Cong forces. As a result, most information on Guerrilla strengths is fragmentary and low-level.

2. Traditionally, the Guerrilla forces have been a major building block of the Vietnamese Communists' military manpower pool, generally performing recruitment and training functions for the higher level units. Consequently, the size and character of the Guerrilla forces have, to a large extent, been shaped by the manpower requirements of the Main and Local Forces. On the other hand, the ability of the Viet Cong to recruit and maintain personnel in the Guerrilla forces has necessarily been dependent on the degree of control and influence that they exert over the rural population.

3. Although knowledge of the strength levels of the Guerrilla forces has been sketchy, several estimates developed since 1966 are believed to give a proper order of magnitude and a good indication of trends. A captured VC Guerrilla specialist's notebook with entries made while attending a Guerrilla warfare conference indicated that countrywide Guerrilla strength totaled 170,351

* The Defense Intelligence Agency does not concur in the revised estimates of Guerrilla forces. A statement of DIA's position follows on p. 21.

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personnel in April 1966. Other captured documents which gave strength figures for a number of provinces and districts for the same time period tended to corroborate the notebook figure. By the end of 1968, captured documents citing Guerrilla strengths for a large number of districts enabled development of estimates for mid-1967 and the second quarter of 1968 using statistical techniques. Use of regression analysis correlating the number of Guerrillas observed in captured documents with population by type of control according to Hamlet Evaluation System reporting resulted in the following estimates of Guerrilla force levels:

Mid-1967	110,000-135,000
2nd Quarter 1968	80,000-125,000

4. These estimates indicated a sizable decline in Guerrilla forces from early 1966 to the second quarter of 1968. Upgrading of personnel to higher level forces and combat attrition were the primary causes of this decline. Viet Cong population control apparently did not change significantly during the period. The Communist shift in emphasis to more conventional-type warfare resulted, however, in a requirement for large inputs of manpower into the Main and Local Forces. Any shortfall in infiltration of North Vietnamese personnel was made up by upgrading of Guerrillas and by some direct recruitment.

5. The greater part of the drain of manpower from the Guerrilla forces occurred during the last months of 1967 as Main and Local Force units were augmented and new units were formed in preparation for the 1968 Tet offensive. The drain on Guerrilla strengths continued over the period of heavy fighting which lasted until the fall of 1968. In addition to the many thousands upgraded, the Guerrillas also took heavy casualties as a result of the extensive use of Guerrilla units in offensive actions in conjunction with Main and Local Force units.

6. After the fall of 1968 and during 1969 it became increasingly difficult to estimate the trend in aggregate Guerrilla force levels. The estimates

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that were made were necessarily soft because they were based on relatively poor data bases. The evidence was sufficient, however, to show a continuing decline in Guerrilla forces. At the end of 1969 these forces were carried as a broadly ranged estimate of 45,000-75,000 personnel.

7. The recent capture of two COSVN-level cadre, however, has provided new information which can be used to develop a new view of these trends during 1969. Captured in mid-January 1970 by Vietnamese Special Forces in Tay Ninh Province, the prisoners, both NVA officers, held the positions of Chief and Assistant Chief, respectively, of the Subregions Cell of the Battlefield Section, Militia Staff, under the Military Staff Department, COSVN.

8. The Militia Staff, directly subordinate to the Military Staff at the COSVN level, performs the staff function of overseeing the organization and development of Guerrilla forces at the lower echelons of the VC administrative structure. The Battlefield Section -- one of four sections subordinate to the Militia Staff -- has the responsibility for processing and consolidating reports on Guerrilla activity and development in the areas under the jurisdiction of COSVN. The Battlefield Section is subdivided further into three territorial subsections or cells. The Lowlands Cell, responsible for the Delta area -- Viet Cong Military Regions (MR) 2 and 3; the Highlands Cell, responsible for MR-6 and MR-10; the Subregions Cell, responsible for the six subregions surrounding and including Saigon, MR-7, and Tay Ninh Province.

9. The information provided indicates that the strength of the Guerrilla forces declined by about 20% from the end of 1968 to the end of 1969 in that part of South Vietnam subordinate to COSVN (that is, MRs 2, 3, 6, 7, 10; the six subregions; and Tay Ninh Province -- roughly the equivalent of GVN III and IV Corps). Specifically, one of the prisoners stated that the strength of militia units declined from 100,000 to 80,000 men. Of the 80,000 men, however, he reported that only about one-half were actually Guerrillas and most were located in MRs 2 and 3. The other half were described as "committed civilians" -- individuals

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who do not assume combat duty because of poor health or lack of motivation. While not explicitly stated, he appeared to refer to the Self-Defense militia as the "committed civilians." This characterization is consistent with the views of the US intelligence community which does not include Self-Defense militia forces in its estimates of the Communist combat force structure. Its members are poorly armed, part-time personnel whose duties consist primarily of constructing fortifications and performing other labor tasks in support of the Guerrillas and Local Forces. Documents have generally indicated that the total strength of the Self-Defense militia is about equal to the strength of the Guerrilla forces. As a general rule, each Guerrilla squad and platoon is supported by an equivalent Self-Defense militia unit.

10. Thus, from the prisoners' testimony, it is concluded that the number of Guerrillas operating in III and IV Corps totaled about 50,000 at the end of 1968, dropping to about 40,000 by the end of 1969. These total strengths in III and IV Corps appear to be generally consistent with estimates of total countrywide Guerrilla strength made for earlier periods. The area breakout of the 1966 notebook figure (170,351) indicated that 66,000 (about 40%) of the total Guerrilla forces were operating in the area of III and IV Corps. This figure together with the prisoners' estimates yield the following series for III and IV Corps:

	<u>Thousand</u>
April 1966	66
End of 1968	50
End of 1969	40

11. Although formulation of a countrywide estimate of Guerrilla strengths on the basis of the prisoners' statement is somewhat tenuous, lack of better evidence requires the use of these figures. The estimates for mid-1967 and the second quarter of 1968 indicated that between roughly 60% and 70% of total Guerrilla forces

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were operating in III and IV Corps. This distribution suggests that there had been a shift since early 1966, when only about 40% of the Guerrillas were located in III and IV Corps. Given the greater intensity of the war in I and II Corps during 1966 and 1967, it seems probable that some change in distribution did take place. Furthermore, captured documents for individual provinces and districts in I and II Corps indicate greater attrition in those areas. On the other hand, the percentages calculated for 1967 and 1968 probably overstate the case somewhat. Using a range of 50%-60% for III and IV Corps gives the following countrywide estimates:

	<u>End of 1968</u>	<u>End of 1969</u>
I and II Corps	30,000- 50,000	20,000-40,000
III and IV Corps	50,000	40,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>80,000-100,000</i>	<i>60,000-80,000</i>

12. The above estimates track remarkably well with past estimates and show a declining trend in the Guerrilla forces through 1969. In order to check the derived estimates for I and II Corps, the ranges were systematically compared with captured documents that give strengths of Guerrillas in several provinces and districts of I and II Corps. The calculated ranges appear to be consistent with the documented strengths.

13. Rounding the ranges and including the previous estimates yields the following series:

April 1966	170,000
Mid-1967	110,000-135,000
2nd Quarter 1968	80,000-125,000
End of 1968	80,000-100,000
End of 1969	60,000- 80,000

14. Additional detail concerning developments during 1969 was provided by the two COSVN-level prisoners. According to these sources, a review

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of Guerrilla activities in 1969 was undertaken by the Militia Staff of COSVN at a one-day meeting of key Militia Staff cadres in September 1969. The meeting was conducted by Colonel Pham Ngoc Hung, Chief of the Militia Staff. At the meeting, Hung stated that VC Guerrilla forces in South Vietnam had incurred heavy losses during 1969 and that unit strengths were down considerably. Guerrilla combat achievements had been much less than in 1968 and not all assigned targets had been attacked. Hung further pointed out that the Guerrillas had lost control over large numbers of the rural population, that no great effort had been made to expand VC-controlled areas, and that the amount of VC-controlled areas had diminished. Hung nevertheless declared that the Guerrillas were not near collapse and that improved coordination with the Main and Local Forces maintained the Guerrillas as a viable combat force.

15. Available evidence from enemy captured documents citing Guerrilla strengths for particular areas presents a similar picture of declining aggregate Guerrilla strength. For example, a series of captured documents from VC Quang Nam Province (GVN Quang Tin Province) show clearly the fluctuation in Guerrilla force strength levels since the end of 1967. The documents show that strength in the province at the end of 1967 -- 10,700 -- had dropped to 8,000 men by the end of January 1968. Upgrading to regular units for the Tet offensive resulted in a further drain of 4,000 personnel by March 1968. By mid-1968, however, total Guerrilla strength was back up to about 7,000 as all-out efforts were made to rebuild Guerrilla units. A final document shows Guerrilla strength in the province down again to 4,000 as of mid-1969. A set of documents from VC Quang Da Province (GVN Quang Nam Province) show a similar pattern of decline. In mid-1967, province-wide strength was 11,000, and by the end of 1969 it had declined to about 5,500 personnel with a goal to rebuild strength in 1970 to a level of 12,000. The erosion of Guerrilla forces is further evident in a captured notebook of General Tin, Commander of the Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region, in which a mid-1969 report indicated total Guerrilla strength in the entire region (GVN Quang Tri and

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Thua Thien Provinces) was only 2,380. Earlier captured documents indicated that total Guerrilla strength in the two provinces was about 6,500 at the end of 1967.

16. Although a major portion of recent evidence tends to verify a decline in the strength levels of the Guerrilla forces countrywide throughout 1969, some information received points to a maintenance of past strength levels and, in some cases, an actual increase in total strength. An example of this is seen in Phy My District of Binh Dinh Province. In January 1968, Guerrilla strength was cited in a document at 733. A recent document, however, shows strength in the district to have increased to 958 by December 1969. Similarly, in Tuy An District of Phu Yen Province, Guerrilla strength at the end of 1967 was 265 personnel, compared with 284 in September 1969. Documents from VC Trang Bang District of Subregion 1 (Southern Tay Ninh) showed Guerrilla strength at 471 in February 1968. By September 1969, total strength in the district had declined to only 423.

17. The conclusions which can be drawn from the above specific strength fixes are necessarily tenuous and accentuate the ambiguities inherent in the information available for estimating overall trends in Guerrilla strength. On balance, however, sufficient evidence exists to verify an erosion of the countrywide strength of the Guerrilla forces throughout 1969. Such an erosion is consistent with three basic factors occurring in the country during 1969: (1) a substantial decline in the degree of VC control over the countryside and a consequent reduction of the population base from which able-bodied manpower could be recruited; (2) a continuation of the use of Main Force units requiring manpower inputs from the Guerrillas, although probably to a much lesser extent than in 1968; and (3) the maintenance of a relatively high level of offensive activity reflected in a high level of casualties, of which the Guerrilla forces undoubtedly took a substantial share.

18. There is considerable recent information which indicates that the Communists are making a serious effort to strengthen the Guerrilla forces qualitatively as well as quantitatively. This

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effort is for the purpose of building an effective low-level military force structure capable of carrying out a strategy of protracted warfare. The reemphasis on the maintenance and development of the Guerrilla forces was indicated as early as the latter part of 1968 when North Vietnamese leaders published long tracts stressing the themes of "peoples' war" and deemphasizing Main Force combat. In late September 1969 the COSVN Current Affairs Committee adopted a resolution which outlined the missions of the fall 1969 military campaign and called for an intensification of Guerrilla warfare. One significant result of this resolution -- at least in the areas under the administrative control of COSVN -- was a reorganization elevating the militia section to a staff status, organizationally equal to the Military, Political, and Rear Service staffs at the region, subregion, and province level. Previously, the militia sections at these echelons were subordinate to the Military staff. While the effects of the reorganization are as yet unknown, this development indicates a serious attempt to refocus priorities on the Guerrilla forces.

19. Further indications that the VC are placing new emphasis on the Guerrilla forces is seen in captured documents from all Corps areas explaining the need for the formation of new and the strengthening of old Guerrilla units to undertake the task of countering Allied pacification efforts in the countryside. One high-level captured document sent by COSVN to the Party and military commands of MR-2 and MR-3 in February of this year explains the missions of the regiments from III Corps introduced into the Delta. According to the document, these regiments are to be used to reinforce the Main Force units operating in the area, and to provide necessary manpower to overcome shortages of personnel in the Local and Guerrilla units. Moreover, platoons and companies from these regiments are to be assigned to hamlets, villages, or districts as needed, creating a "change in the balance of force" at the village and hamlet levels. Offensive actions are to be small-scale and all efforts are to be made to minimize casualties while consolidating forces at the village and hamlet levels in order to exert maximum control over the rural population. The significance of

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this document is clear. It recognizes the deficiencies of the enemy force structure at the lower levels and indicates that Main Force units will be broken down to supply manpower to the Local and Guerrilla forces.

20. Although evidence to date is insufficient to estimate the trend in Guerrilla strengths thus far in 1970, available indicators tend to support the conclusion that Guerrilla strength has not declined significantly below levels reached at the end of 1969. GVN control of the countryside has not notably increased during the first half of 1970 and casualty levels have been reduced somewhat over the 1969 rate.

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FORM NO. 241 1 FEB 55		REPLACES FORM 36-8 WHICH MAY BE USED. (47)

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Next 12 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Notes from the DDI

4 April 1968

1. The Maxwell Taylor briefing scheduled for Monday will be postponed about a week. Justification for the postponement is that the people who have to do it are tied up on other things.
2. Tuesday's briefing on Infiltration will be handled by OCI with any assistance which OER can give. Either [] or [] will give the briefing. DIA's role will be to follow our show. Principal points to be covered are:

How raw data are arrived on Infiltration; how they are translated into finished intelligence.

All of this in the form of a flow chart type of description. If Maxwell Taylor receives the briefing favorably, it will be given to the full PFIAB on Friday.

3. Most important announcement: We (CIA) will sponsor a joint CIA/DIA MACV Order of Battle review to start on Wednesday. The DDI wants from you a list of the CIA team members and prefers these to be at the working level, i.e., from SAVA George Allen or []. The opening session will be chaired by R.J. Smith or by Ed Proctor depending on who is here and then turned over to Paul V. Walsh. The Director has made it clear to the USIB members that the White House wishes that he handle the present OB analysis.

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18 MAR 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: Resolutions of the MACV OB Problem

1. George Allen, SAVA, called me Saturday, 16 March 68, to say that the Director said to go full speed ahead on publishing our analysis of what MACV's OB should have been and is currently. Mr. Helms apparently had had a phone conversation with Mr. Rostow during which both agreed that the MACV figures were appalling.

2. We will therefore publish a series of reports this week outlining what kind of a base against which the VC/NVA losses should be attrited followed by separate analyses for each of the components of that base - main and local forces, administrative services, guerrillas, political OB and self-defense forces.

PAUL V. WALSH
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Distribution:

Orig. & 1 - Addressee

2 - OD/OER

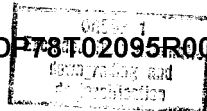
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FOR CONFERENCE ON DCI ASSESSMENT
OF ENEMY STRENGTH

10 April 1968

Morning Session*: 1000, Room 7 E 26

A. Opening Remarks

Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence

R. Jack Smith, Deputy Director for Intelligence

B. Administrative Matters

C. Briefing on CIA Assessment of Enemy Strength -
Paul V. Walsh, DD/OER

LUNCH - 1200

Afternoon Session: 1300

General Discussion of CIA Views

Main/Local Forces -

Conference Discussion

11 April 1968

Morning Session - 0830

CIA View of Administrative Support Forces -

Conference Discussion

Afternoon Session

CIA View of Guerrilla Forces -

Conference Discussion

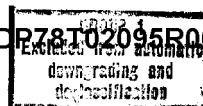
12 April 1968

Morning Session

CIA View of Self Defense Forces - George Allen

* Evening sessions will be held to the extent necessary to complete that days agenda.

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12 April 1968 (continued)

Morning Session (continued)

CIA View of Political Infrastructure and Assault Youth -
Sam Adams

Conference Discussion of Above items.

Afternoon Session

Recapitulation and Convening of Working Groups and Steering
Group

15 April 1968

Morning Session

Report of Working Groups and Steering Group

Afternoon Session

CIA Views on Concepts and Formats for Reporting and Assessing
Enemy Strengths -

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16 April 1968

Morning Session

Conference Discussion of Concepts and Formats for Reporting
and Assessing Enemy Strengths

Afternoon Session

Preparation of Final Report

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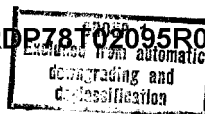
Conference on DCI Assessment
of Enemy Strengths
10-16 April 1968

Schedule of Conference Rooms

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Room No.</u>
Wednesday	10 Apr	0900-1630	7 E 26
Thursday	11 Apr	0900-1300	7 D 34
Thursday	11 Apr	1300-1630	7 E 26
Friday	12 Apr	0900-1300	7 E 26
Friday	12 Apr	1300-1630	4 F 31
Monday	15 Apr	0900-1630	7 E 26
Tuesday	16 Apr	0900-1630	7 E 26

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List of Delegates to Conference on SCL
Assessment of Enemy Strength
DELEGATION
10-16 April 1968

SAIGON

Colonel Daniel O. Graham, USA (Chief of Delegation)
Colonel Paul Weiler, USMC
Cmdr. James A. Meacham, USN
1st Lt. Kelly L. Robinson, USA

HONOLULU

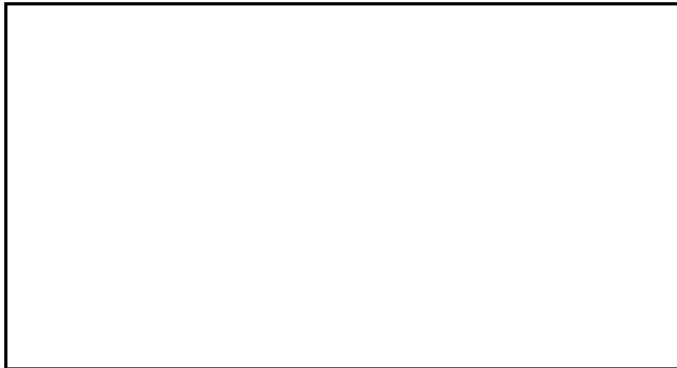
Lt. Colonel George M. Hamscher, USA
Lt. Colonel James S. Wilson, USMC

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, COMPTROLLER

Jerry E. Bush*

DIA

Major General Grover C. Brown*
Captain Walter N. Morgan, USN (Chief of Delegation)



SERVICES*

ARMY - MAJOR Joseph R. Dinda
NAVY - Cmdr. Roy L. Beavers
MARINE - Lt. Colonel Edward W. Dzialo & Lt. Col. Neil B. Mills, USMC
AIR FORCE - Lt. Colonel Scott S. Porter
Captain Richard L. Bohannon (alternate)

STATE

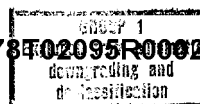
To be announced each day
Wed. - Mr. Sarris
Thurs. - Mr. Steve R. Lyne
Fri. - Mr. Joseph Weiss

NSA

To be announced

* Observers

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CIA

Paul V. Walsh (*Chief of Delegation*)

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George W. Allen

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Samuel A. Adams

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LOUIS G. SARRIS ✓

RICHARD W. TEARE

JAMES H. CHEATHAM

STEPHEN R. LYNE ✓

JOSEPH H. WEISS ✓

NSA



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NOON
8 APRIL 68

PROPOSED AGENDA FOR CONFERENCE ON
DCI ASSESSMENT OF ENEMY STRENGTH

10 April 1968

Morning Session*: 1000, ~~1000~~

A. Opening Remarks

R. Jack Smith, Deputy Director for Intelligence

B. Administrative Matters

C. Briefing on CIA Assessment of Enemy Strength -
Paul V. Walsh, DD/OER

LUNCH - 1200

Afternoon Session: 1300

General Discussion of CIA Views

Main/Local Forces -

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Conference Discussion

11 April 1968

Morning Session - 0830

CIA View of Administrative Support Forces -

25X1

Conference Discussion

Afternoon Session

CIA View of Guerrilla Forces -

25X1

Conference Discussion

12 April 1968

Morning Session

CIA View of Self Defense Forces (and Assault Youth -
George Allen

* Evening sessions will be held to the extent necessary to complete
that days agenda.

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12 April 1968 (continued)

Morning Session (continued)

CIA View of Political Infrastructure and Assault Youth -
Sam Adams

Conference Discussion of Above items.

Afternoon Session

Recapitulation and Convening of Working Groups and Steering
Group

15 April 1968

Morning Session

Report of Working Groups and Steering Group

Afternoon Session

CIA Views on Concepts and Formats for Reporting and Assessing
Enemy Strengths -

25X1

16 April 1968

Morning Session

Conference Discussion of Concepts and Formats for Reporting
and Assessing Enemy Strengths

Afternoon Session

Preparation of Final Report

- 2 -

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TOP SECRET

19 March 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Accuracy of New York Times 19 March 1968 Article
by Neil Sheehan on Communist Strength in
South Vietnam

1. The reference article cites two estimates of Communist strength believed in South Vietnam on 30 January at the start of the Tet offensive. One of these is referred to as a "national intelligence estimate," and the other as a "new assessment" prepared by CIA. Mr. Sheehan clearly had access to the data from SNIE 14.3-67, Capabilities of the Vietnamese Communists for Fighting in South Vietnam, dated 13 November 1967, and from a joint OCI-GER study, The Communist Ability to Recoup Their Tet Military Losses, dated 1 March 1968, produced only in typescript.

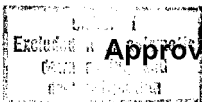
2. A comparison of data follows:

Item	Sheehan--N.Y. Times		SNIE 14.3-67	Later CIA Study
	Quoting SNIE	Quoting CIA Study		
Total strength, mil. & pol. (000)	448 to 483	515 - 600	448 - 473	515 - 600
Main force units VC/NVA (000)	118	160	118	160
Guerrilla platoons (000)	70-90	100-120	70-90	100-120
Admin. & logist. -pp. (000)	35-40	75-100	35-40	75-100
Political (000)	75-80	80-120	75-85	80-120
Irregulars (000)	150	100	150	100

3. As a comparison shows quickly, only one figure in the SNIE -- the upper end of the bracket of total strength -- is slightly different in the Sheehan article. The later CIA study data are all quoted accurately.

EDWARD L. ALLEN

Director



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- 10 -

OD/OER:ELAllen:wa [] (19 Mar 68)

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U.S. UNDERVALUED ENEMY'S STRENGTH BEFORE OFFENSIVE

C.I.A. Reports Forces Were
Significantly Larger Than
Intelligence Estimates

GAP IS 50,000 TO 100,000

New Assessment of Foe's
Manpower Is Awaited—
Losses Are in Dispute

By NEIL SHEEHAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 18—

The Central Intelligence Agency has concluded that the enemy's strength in South Vietnam at the beginning of its winter-spring offensive was significantly greater than United States officials thought at the time.

The new assessment was sent to the White House early this month, well-placed informants said today. It gives a range of 515,000 to 600,000 men when the offensive against South Vietnamese cities and major towns was launched on Jan. 30, at the time of the Lunar New Year.

The so-called national intelligence estimate of enemy military and political manpower in South Vietnam current at the time gave a range of 448,000 to 483,000 men.

Estimate Was Augmented

The national intelligence estimate is a compromise reached after discussion in the American intelligence community—the C.I.A., the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the intelligence branch of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The estimate was revised only slightly after the offensive, but it was still being used in January, though it was modified by the addition of approximately 15,000 North Vietnamese troops that had begun infiltrating in December. With the addition it was 52,000 to 102,000 men below the estimate the C.I.A. has now propounded.

A new national intelligence estimate on enemy strength in South Vietnam in the light of the offensive has apparently not yet been completed.

Figure Is Disputed

American military officials in Saigon have reported that 50,000 North Vietnamese soldiers and Vietcong guerrillas were killed between Jan. 30 and the end of last week.

This figure is disputed. Some intelligence officials here are understood to believe that the enemy forces have probably replaced the majority of their casualties with recruits. Reports from the scene support this view.

During his visit to Washington last November, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, United States commander in Saigon,

Continued on Page 3, Column 1

cited as evidence of "remarkable progress" in Vietnam a decline in enemy armed strength from 285,000 in the fall of 1966 to 242,000 as of November.

Last week American military officials in Saigon said they estimated that armed enemy manpower had further declined to a range of 207,000 to 220,000 men. No explanation was available here on how this estimate had been reached.

Officials later acknowledged that General Westmoreland's comparison had been achieved by deleting two categories of manpower—the political apparatus and the part-time irregulars—that had been included in the figure of 285,000.

These categories were included, they said, the comparison would be between the 1966 figure of 285,000 and the 448,000 to 483,000 man range reached in the national intelligence estimate.

General Westmoreland's total included the three other categories of main North Vietnamese and Vietcong divisions, regiments and battalions; the squads on the village level, and the Vietcong administrative and logistic structure.

These were estimated at 223,000 to 248,000 men in the national intelligence estimate, the official said. Why General Westmoreland used the 242,000 figure has never been explained.

Even if his calculations are applied to the new C.I.A. estimate, there is still a significant increase—a range of 335,000 to 380,000 men in those three categories.

The two categories excluded by General Westmoreland, the political cadres and the hamlet-level irregulars, loosely organized and light armed, played a major role in the assault on the cities, military and civilian sources say.

It is believed that the larger part of the higher estimate of enemy strength reached by the C.I.A. has resulted from improved intelligence and surfacing of more of the Vietcong apparatus during the offensive. The rest of the increase is attributed to actual growth between November and January.

United States intelligence, perhaps because of its heavy military emphasis, has consistently underestimated the extent of the enemy's political, administrative and logistic network.

Comparisons of Results

Following is a comparison of the five categories of enemy military and political manpower as given in the national intelligence estimate and the new C.I.A. estimate:

North Vietnamese and main Vietcong units—the national intelligence estimate gave a total of 118,000 men—54,000 North Vietnamese and 64,000 Vietcong; the C.I.A. estimate is 160,000, about equally divided.

Village guerrilla platoons and squads—the national estimate was 70,000 to 90,000 men; the C.I.A. figure is 100,000 to 120,000.

Administrative and logistic apparatus—the national estimate was 35,000 to 40,000; the C.I.A. calculated 75,000 to 100,000.

Political cadres—the national intelligence estimate was 75,000 to 85,000 men; the C.I.A. figure is 80,000 to 120,000.

Irregulars (also referred to as self-defense militia)—the national estimate was 150,000; the C.I.A. calculates 100,000.

The C.I.A. estimate also found that North Vietnam would counter the advantage of any American reinforcements sent to Vietnam by moving more infantry battalions into the South. The conclusion has been cited by a number of senior civilian officials in the State and Defense Departments in their argument against giving more troops to General Westmoreland.

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	Accuracy of New York Times, 19 March 68 Article by Neil Sheehan on Communist Strengths in South Vietnam	REGISTRY
SOURCE		CIA CONTROL NO.
DOC. NO.		192084/68
DOC. DATE		DATE DOCUMENT RECEIVED
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